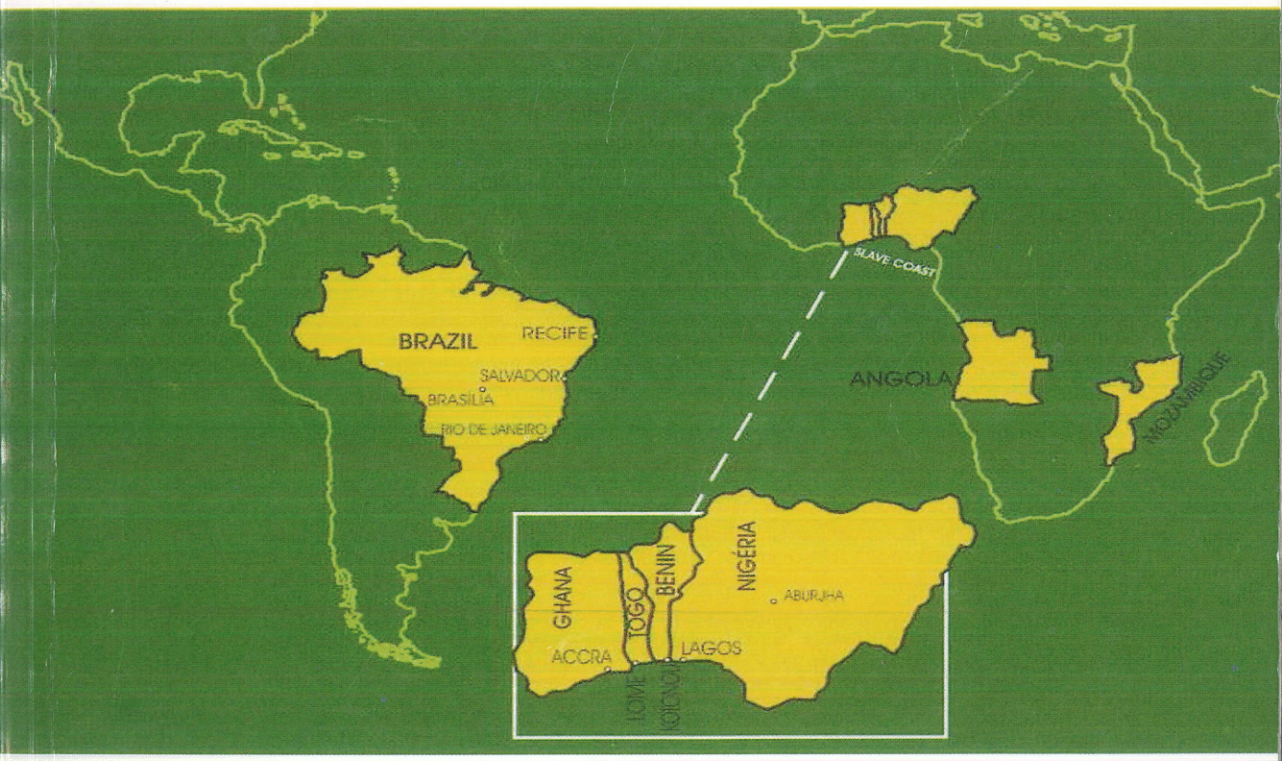
Back to Africa

Volume I

Afro-Brazilian Returnees and their Communities

Edited by
KWESI KWAA PRAH



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BACK TO AFRICA

Afro-Brazilian Returnees and their Communities

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BACK TO AFRICA

Afro-Brazilian Returnees and their Communities

VOLUME 1

EDITED BY

KWESI KWAA PRAH

The Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS)
P.O. Box 359
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South Africa

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Kwesi Kwaa Prah
Cape Town

CONTRIBUTORS

Kwesi Kwaa Prah is Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS) based in Cape Town, South Africa.

Anani Dzidzienyo is Professor for Afro-Brazilian Studies, Brown University, Rhode Island, USA.

João José Reis teaches at the Federal University of Bahia and has been a Visiting Professor at the University of Michigan and Princeton University.

Mônica Lima teaches the History of Africa in Brazilian institutions. She works at CAp/UFRJ (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro).

Roquinaldo Ferreira is an Assistant Professor in the History/African-American and African Studies Department, University of Virginia.

Milton Guran is an Anthropologist and an Associate Researcher at the Oral History and Image Laboratory (LABHOI), Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil.

Alcione M. Amos is a Senior Researcher at the Smithsonian, Washington, USA.

Samuel Boadi-Siaw is a Professor of History, University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

Marco Aurelio Schaumloeffel was sent by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as lecturer for Portuguese language and Brazilian Culture to the Ghana Institute of Languages/University of Ghana in Accra. Since 2005 he is lecturer at the University of the West Indies, Barbados.

Kwame Essien is a Ph.D candidate in the History Department, University of Texas, Austin.

Félix Ayoh'Omidire is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Foreign Languages, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

Femi Ojo-Ade is Professor Emeritus at St. Mary's College of Maryland, USA.

Olatunji Ojo teaches History at Brock University, St. Catharines, Canada.

Elisée Soumonni is Professor in the Department of History, Université Nationale du Bénin

Ana Alakija is a leading figure in the Agencia Afro-Latina e Euro-Americana de Informacao.

INTRODUCTION

BACK TO AFRICA, STATUS REPORT, AFRO-BRAZILIANS

KWESI KWAA PRAH

In an earlier text, I had argued that an outstanding feature about the history and demographics of people of African descent is that today, we are distributed practically across the whole globe, in uneven concentrations of numbers.[1] We are everywhere. The largest numbers are in Brazil, where in various shades of colouring, Afro-Brazilians form about half of the population. People of African descent are also to be found in Surinam, French Guyana, British Guyana, Colombia, Venezuela, and in fewer numbers in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. African descendants are also in the whole of Middle-America, Mexico, the United States, Canada and the whole of the West Indies. Over the centuries, large numbers have ended up in Western Asia and, indeed, a steady trickle has found its way into India, Central Asia, the Balkans and beyond. It is noteworthy that the African presence in Asia, Europe and the Americas is hardly recent. Africans were present in ancient Greece and Rome; we have been in Arabia and other parts of Asia centuries before the rise of Islam. Africans have for centuries been taken into Europe. This historical reality is increasingly attracting attention.[2] The international trade in African slaves expanded that presence so that it became essentially global.[3]

These groups are, as it were, the old Diaspora. In more recent times, indeed, over the past century, large numbers have gone on to Europe and to North America and beyond. Indeed, lately, considerable numbers in a steady stream have been smuggling and forcing their way in open boats and on foot to Europe. So whilst in the more distant past we were forcibly, and in captivity, taken from Africa into inter-continental bondage and servitude, today Africans in the hope for better futures are stowing away and smuggling their way to Europe and the more prosperous areas of the world. The net effect is that today Africans are to be found everywhere. What is sometimes forgotten is that the roots of most of this migration

are located squarely in the history of the slavery and the contemporary penury of Africans.

Except for some of the migration, mainly to Europe and North America which has taken place over the last century, in almost all these parts of the world where Africans find themselves today, they have, for the most part, been taken there in bondage and pain. At different places and climes in the world, Africans have toiled and laboured for different masters. During the era of the Atlantic slave trade, so many Africans were taken out of the continent that by 1850, about a third of the people of African descent lived outside Africa. For almost four and a half centuries (1441-1888) the trans-Atlantic slave trade created an African Diaspora of about 15-20 million people, landed from many parts of Africa, particularly the West Coast. The whole process of the Atlantic slave trade was genocidal. Slave raids and slaving wars were devastating not only for the human lives lost, but also for the extended sociological dislocations they produced for 450 years on African society, and the legacy of all of this. More slaves lost their lives in the transportation process, both on the continent and the trans-Atlantic journey – 'the middle passage.' Between 10 per cent and 20 per cent of the slaves died within a year of their landing in the Western hemisphere.

The majority of the bondaged Africans, some 42 per cent, became slaves in the sugar plantations of the Caribbean. Brazilian sugar plantations and mines had about 38 per cent, and about 15 per cent became plantation and mining slaves in different parts of Latin America. About 5 per cent were sold into North America. European colonialism, as an economic system, was founded on African slavery, and most historians have long been in agreement about this. The emergence of capitalism, as an economic system, was directly linked to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the wealth generated by the slave trade and labour of those enslaved peoples. Marx wrote that, 'The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black skins, signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation.'[4]

In his well-known 1943 work, *Capitalism and Slavery*, Eric Williams, (later Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago) explained the social changes that were instrumental for the establishment of Caribbean slavocracy; from the enslavement of the local Amerindian Carib populations, to the use of white convict and indentured labour, to black slavery. Williams points out that, the origin of black slavery can be explained on the basis of economic, not

racial motives. 'It had to do not with the colour of the labourer, but the cheapness of the labour'.[5] In the seventeenth century, Irish slaves were not uncommon in the New World.

Between the Arab and European slavers, while some castrated Africans, others never spared the rod nor the branding iron; masters drove Africans as they did beasts of burden. Hunwick has reminded us that a great deal of interest has been generated regarding the African diaspora in the Americas. In comparative terms, the equally remarkable forced migration of Africans from their homelands to foreign lands. This enormous involuntary movement of enslaved Africans to the lands of the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and South Asia emerged after the establishment of an Islamic world empire in the seventh and eighth centuries of the Christian era. Arab-led slavery of Africans began eight centuries before the transatlantic slave trade, and for the most part did not end until several decades after the Atlantic slave trade was brought to an end.[6] Some of this Arab-led slavery continues to the present day. The lifting and shipment of slaves across the Sahara, up the Nile valley and the Red Sea, and across the Indian Ocean to the Persian Gulf and India, has most probably accounted for the enslavement of as many Africans from their societies as did the transatlantic trade. The supreme and continued tragedy of Arab-led slavery of Africans is that it has lingered on till the present day. For both the Arab-led slavery of Africans and the Atlantic slave trade, the records of whipping and thrashing, branding and the castration of Africans, did not only mark and mutilate our bodies, but, most traumatically, our minds.

THE BRAZILIAN CASE

For a variety of reasons, it is often not easily realized that Brazil is home to the largest contingent of people of African descent in the African diaspora. Indeed, estimates sometimes suggest that, today Brazilians are close to 50 per cent, made up of people of African descent. Sometimes this statistic is denied by some who do not want to be identified as people of African descent or possibly associated with Africa.

As early as the middle of the sixteenth century there began at Bahia extensive and prolonged Negro importation from Africa, and the Bay of All Saints in Bahia became for all intents and purposes the principal port of entry into Brazil for this trade in black skins from the African coast. Bahia was and continued to be the preeminent commercial city of Brazil till the beginning of the 1830s. Certainly, during the colonial period, lasting almost three centuries (1549-1822), Bahia was the focus of wealth production in Brazil. The forced African population transfer to Brazil eventually became what is, probably, 'the greatest intercontinental displacement of Negro peoples

which ever occurred.' African slave resistance mounted with frequency during the early part of the nineteenth century. In 1807, 1809, 1813, 1816, 1826, 1827, 1828 and 1830, slave revolts broke out in Bahia, culminating in the major Malê rebellion of 1835.[7] A good part of the rebels were Muslim. The 1835 rebellion marked an important watershed and triggered the beginning of the repatriation process for some freed slaves and also those suspected of instigating or provoking resistance by the slave community. However, long before this period, some returnee cases had occurred. The port of re-entry was usually Whydah where the Portuguese had build a fort in 1721.[8] Estimates suggest that about three thousand returnees from Brazil came back to African shores in the nineteenth century.[9]

There are distinct cultural reflections and legacies of the African past which have persisted to the present day, and which in some instances are actively celebrated by Brazilians of all extractions. Some of these cultural traits are even better celebrated in Brazil, with respect and respectability, than one would find with African traditions of similar religious kind on the African continent today.

There is a great deal of truth in Robert E. Park's observation, made many years ago, that ' ... with the exception of Brazil, there is no country outside of Africa, ... Where a people of African origin has sought to preserve African customs or African culture.'[10] The work of people like Vivaldo da Costa Lima and Pierre Verger have emphasized the persistence of Africanist religious traditions in Brazil.

In similar fashion Yeda Pessoa de Castro's work on African linguistic tracings and affinities in contemporary Brazilian speech forms demonstrate the long-standing connections at a cultural level between Africans and Brazilians.

BACK TO AFRICA: RETURNEES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

This conference is the first of three planned conferences on the African diaspora with respect to the returnee phenomenon of 'Back to Africa'. This volume is the transactional record of the first conference which deals with Afro-Brazilian returnees and their communities in Africa.

The second conference will be addressing the history, place and role of returnees from the West Indies in African society from a historical and socio-cultural perspective. The proceedings of that will appear as a second volume. The third meeting will direct attention to returnees and the returnee phenomenon with reference to North America. We expect that at the end of this cycle of activities, three volumes will appear on the 'Back to Africa' phenomenon and history.

CONTRASTS AND INTERSECTIONS

These three geographical locations have produced different reactions, or if you prefer, different imprints on the social psychology, modes of livelihood, and cultural expressions of returnees and their descendants. The historical implications of these differences have been profound.

The West Indian returnees, starting with some members of the West Indian Regiments which were brought to fight colonial wars for the British, and the freed slaves who were returned from either the high seas or the West Indian islands, principally to Sierra Leone and its environs, have socially, politically and economically identified themselves largely as Creoles. They have been crucial to the establishment of western societies in that part of Africa. They have enjoyed, since their return, relatively elevated positions in the emergent societies that were created in the West Africa littoral. They have also inadvertently constituted sometimes closed in-groups in the areas where they settled.

These conditions have to some extent fostered cleavages and sometimes tensions with the more primeval African communities amongst whom they settled. However, elsewhere, West Indians have more easily fully integrated themselves into the primeval communities. We can say that the North American returnees have been the least successful in terms of their fuller integration into African societies. In a place like Liberia, where the largest concentrations of North American-African returnees settled, they regarded themselves often as a separate caste, privileged, westernized and therefore, in the assumed logic of the situation, civilized and better than their more totally native brethren and sisters.

It has often been argued that the conflicts we have seen in Liberia, over the past few decades, are indeed largely a reflection of these tensions. The Americo-Liberians, as they call themselves, have been the least successful in their resettlement, as returnees in Africa. Why this is so, we still have to find out.

The Afro-Brazilians have, in contrast to the above two groups, been the most successful in the reintegration process in Africa. In all the areas where they have settled on returning to Africa, within one or two generations they have literally melted into the socio-cultural, economic and political landscape of Africa. As Taboms, Nagos, Agudas, they have virtually retribalized into Africa. The lessons of these contrasts in resettlement patterns between these three groups should be the lessons and truths of our three conferences project.

What is also interesting is that there has been remarkable movement within Africa of returnees and their communities. This is especially

noticeable in West Africa. Some lineages have crossed the Atlantic many times over the years.

CAPTURED IN THESE COVERS

In the memorable conference which took place at the Garden Court, Sandton City, Johannesburg, South Africa (14th – 15th July 2008), the following papers which were later revised and are reproduced here, were presented. The collection includes two which were subsequently added.

Anani Dzidzienyo's paper takes a very broad approach to the subject of Afro-Braziliana, which he conceived as embracing the interconnectedness of both Afro-Brazilians – defined as Brazilians of African descent – and their progeny who returned to West Africa. He indicates that it is necessary to seek out direct and indirect linkages in the relationships of state and society at home and abroad, with extra attention to the ways and means through which Afro-Brazilians and Afro-Brazilian issues have been inserted into Brazil's relations with independent African countries since the early 1960s. This approach allows for a critical appreciation of historical connections and their deployment in contemporary relations.

His interest has much less to do with the specific role of Afro-Brazilian-descended communities and their role within contemporary African polities where they are found; rather, he attempts to shed some light on the ways and means through which they can be seen as historical agents. Questions of contemporary agency are of course another matter. This paper makes a contribution to the critical re-examination of the nature of African and Brazilian relations, one which pays attention to the presence or absence of Afro-Brazilians and underscores the exigency for transcending the disproportionate significance assigned to these historical connections.

The paper is in four parts. The first part lays out the terrain of continental African and diasporic African relations in the early years and how Afro-Latin America indirectly makes an appearance. The second part looks at Brazil's relations with independent African countries and the obvious and not-so-obvious racial matters contained therein. The third part deals specifically with the sojourn of Ryamundo Souza Dantas in Ghana in the early 1960s and places him within the body of Brazilian contradictions, some of which are discussed in Part 2, and his own complicated reactions to solidarities in Ghana at the time. Part 4 takes a look at, thirty years retrospectively, of the 1978 visit of the Asantehene to Brazil as an illustration of Africa coming to Brazil at a time of serious changes in Brazilian national politics. The paper throws light on aspects of African and Brazilian relations which go beyond usual examinations of this subject and implications therein.

João José Reis' paper is a discussion of the Brazil, African returnees left behind. This is a background that explains much of their choices when they reconstructed their lives in Africa. The story begins and ends in Bahia itself. The authoritative presentation of issues draws on the immense experience of the author on the subject.

Mônica Lima focuses on the migration from Brazilian ports, between 1830-1870. The study assesses the numbers, places of departure in Brazil, ports of destination in Africa, gender characteristics of the groups, and the probable reasons of returning – and the changes in these elements during the period. As a case study, Lima pays special attention on the group of returnees that went from Rio de Janeiro to Congo-Angola region (specially Luanda and Cabinda), in the same period (1830-1870).

Roquinaldo Ferreira discusses the social and cultural links between Angola and Brazil during the era of the transatlantic slave trade. It focuses on how the connections between the cities of Luanda and Benguela – two of the largest slave ports in the history of the slave trade – and several Brazilian cities (Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and Recife) led to the creation of an 'Atlantic Community' linking Angola to Brazil. The author is particularly interested in reconstructing biographies of individuals who crossed the Atlantic back and forth. He analyzes the trajectories of free and enslaved Africa, imperial administrators and soldiers.

Milton Guran discusses the returnees of Ghana, Benin and Nigeria: Agudas and Tabon. The paper looks at returnee slaves to Africa and the formation of Aguda (in present-day Benim, Togo and Nigeria) and Tabon (in Ghana) communities during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These migratory movements back and forth across the Atlantic that occurred during and after the end of the slave trade, constituted a complex identity construction process in these African countries, enabling them to overcome the stigma of slavery and become integrated into these societies. This text has two important concerns: one is to understand how these identities took shape in the past; the other is to map the way their members currently act in an organized and differentiated fashion in specific fields, such as religion and party politics.

Alcione Amos' contribution on the history of the Afro-Brazilian community in Togo with a special emphasis on the Olympio family which played a pivotal role in the history of the country. The Afro-Brazilian community of Togo can be characterized as an outgrowth from the communities that had previously been formed in Dahomey (Benin) and Nigeria (primarily Lagos). The Lome branch of the Afro-Brazilian community in Togo did not start to form until the 1880s. From a beginning

as traders and colonial government functionaries under the Germans (the first colonial power in Togo), Afro-Brazilians remained in positions of leadership under the British and the French and finally emerged as leaders of the movement for independence after World War II.

This importance was due to several factors. Afro-Brazilians were very capable businessmen thus they wielded a lot of power and accumulated a lot of wealth. They were, in general, well-educated and in some cases spoke several European languages. They kept abreast of developments beyond the borders of their country and were very savvy in using their knowledge and their financial power.

The Olympio family, along with the Souzas, Amorin and Baeta were Christians, while the Pereira, Geraldo, Reis, Aguiar and Santana were Muslim. But they all had one thing in common – they contributed extensively for the development of Togolese society.

Samuel Boadi-Siaw's paper discusses the returnees who returned to Ghana in the nineteenth century to stay. These formed part of a larger group which resettled in places on the coast of West Africa from Accra (east) to the eastern coast of Nigeria.

Boadi-Siaw's view is that most of these returnees avoided the places where their ancestors had been forcibly taken from for a number of reasons, all basically arising from their feeling of not being fully welcome in these foreign places. Starting from 1829 some returnees ended up in Ghana.

As returnees without any sponsors, the Afro-Brazilians' survival depended on the goodwill of the local people. In their case, a local chief, Kwaku Ankrah of the Otublohum section of the Ga people, welcomed them and provided their immediate needs in addition to other resources that enabled them to survive and prosper. Thus they and others who came later from Brazil thrived, and by relying on the skills and experiences they had gained in Brazil, they made significant contributions to the economic, social and even political life of Accra and the rest of the country. As an unsponsored group of returnees, these Afro-Brazilians had to adapt to life conditions in the country quickly in order to survive. In fact, they adapted so well and intermingled with the local people to the extent that these Afro-Brazilians – known as the 'Tabom' people in Accra – cannot be distinguished from any others in physical appearance, language or station in life. One characteristic they carried with them from Brazil that helped greatly was their awareness of the advantages formal education could give them or their children. This led them to take advantage of any educational opportunities the incoming Europeans brought, especially for their children. This enabled the Tabom people to secure a place within the emerging educated elite of early twentieth

Century coastal Ghana, completely out of proportion to their numbers – a position they have largely maintained till now.

Marco Aurelio Schaumloeffel makes an interesting presentation of the history, role and linkages established by the Tabom people of Ghana. He shows how they have succeeded in integrating themselves into larger Ghanaian society and have been able to establish themselves at the principal levels of Ghanaian society. This contribution makes for interesting reading and must be read in conjunction with the other papers (Samuel Boadi-Siaw and Kwame Essien) which deal specifically with the Tabom people of Ghana.

Kwame Essien's paper adds to existing historiography about Afro-Brazilian communities in Benin, Togo and Nigeria. It examines the different ways the Tabom people are using strategic identification for material profit, while seeking to highlight avenues the Tabom people, The Brazilian Embassy in Ghana, the Ghanaian Government and other institutions are constructing to facilitate Tabom peoples' yearnings to visit Brazil. He argues that ongoing preparation by the Tabom people to visit Brazil for the first time is not only shaped by the history of their ancestral ties to Brazil, but is largely influenced by economic interests through tourism. The new awareness generated by the Tabom people has led to long-term plans to restore historical landmarks of their community.

Felix Ayoh'Omidire argues that, in West Africa, for diverse reasons, the vast majority of the returnees settled in the coastal regions, stretching from the Cape Coast in modern day Ghana, through Aneho in Togo, Ouidah, Cotonou and Porto-Novo in Benin Republic, Badagry and Lagos in Nigeria and moving as far south as the island of Fernão do Pó. Paradoxically, in West Africa these returnees, who came to be known as the Aguda or Amaro in Nigeria, Togo and Benin, and the Tabom (meaning: it's alright) in Ghana, were characterized at the same time by their unified Afro-Latin identity and a zeal for the jealous valorization of their African cultural heritage. In the decades following their return, many of them, like Martiniano Eliseu Bonfim, Rudolfo Martins Bamgboxe, Felisberto Souza, João Esan da Rocha and the eminent jurist family of the Alakijas, stood up against the British colonial administration in Lagos, affirming their professional and political independence from the British and championing the Yoruba cultural renaissance under whose banner future western-educated Nigerians like Chief Obafemi Awolowo would launch the political platform for the independence of Nigeria from Britain in 1960. The paper analyzes the dual identity of the Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Cuban returnees in the political and cultural development of West Africa, especially Nigeria.

Femi Ojo-Ade suggests that the inhuman enterprise of the Atlantic slave trade has been the object of much criticism and condemnation over the years. Much attention has been paid to the fortunes and misfortunes of the slaves and generations of their descendants spread across the globe.

The stories of slaves and their descendants who made the return to Africa constitutes a particularly interesting phenomenon, as it makes one think of the possibility, and fact, of the original home transmuting into a diaspora home with all the attendant dilemmas. Are the returnees able, allowed, encouraged, to fit back into a home from which they were displaced, snatched away, sold and bought like chattels? What is the relationship between them and those among whom they have returned? Harmony, or disharmony? Renewed family and friendship, or new enmity based upon feelings of betrayal and distrust? Issues of culture, weltanschauung, also come into play: are the returnees still African in mind or are they alienated from home, assimilated into the trans-Atlantic (exile) way of life or, indeed, caught between there and here?

The author looks at the Lagosian returnee experience. Observers always point out their profound influence on Lagosian architecture. Of more importance, in his estimation, is the human relationship, as well as the returnees' cultural, social and psychological make-up as they settled back into a home that was no longer the only one they, and their families, knew.

The problematics of exile, the projections of home as original or as a replication are issues of interest. The possibilities of new findings in regards to a people's past and present, as resources for building a future better than the present. For Ojo-Ade, perhaps the experience of those Afro-Brazilians in Lagos will help to explain some of the current issues of a place immensely rich, yet excruciatingly poor. Among the prominent returnees is the family of Candido da Rocha. In an interview given a few years ago, his daughter refuted the rumor that the family was planning to return to Brazil. Would such a notion be symptomatic of the general Nigerian conundrum, or due to the particular dilemma of the exiled finally admitting that the original home is really an alien land?

Olatunji Ojo argues that, Nigerian-Brazil relations have spanned nearly three centuries, embracing economic, cultural and educational affairs. The initial basis of this relationship was the Atlantic slave trade during which hundreds of thousands Nigerians were transported to Brazil, and Brazilian traders and capital moved in the opposite direction. Following the Bahian slave revolt of the early nineteenth century and the final cessation of the slave trade in the 1850s, human traffic between the two countries continued as ex-slaves returned to their homelands. Many of the returnees had families on

both sides of the Atlantic thereby facilitating continuous cultural, economic and kinship exchanges which are now widely recognized as the underpinning factor in the evolution of the Nigerian-Yoruba ethnic consciousness as well as the pre-eminence of Candomblé, a Yoruba-derived religion in Brazil.

The author uses statistics to examine the quantity of trade between Bahia and Lagos. This adds to our knowledge of the economic relations between Nigeria and Brazil. Finally he argues that the dispersal and creation of an Afro-Brazilian diaspora in Nigeria, unlike the picture of a monolithic Aguda group common in the literature, is a reflection of how ethno-political and other considerations have undermined the unity of the community.

Although the various business connections, which the Aguda descendants maintained at the beginning of the twentieth century, have ceased to be their exclusive preserve because many other Nigerians are now doing business with Brazil, the family connections engendered by the slave trade remain exclusively theirs. The paper takes a life history approach using the short biographies of three leading Lagos Aguda families as trajectories to understanding the Brazilian legacy. The families are that of the Pereira, Gomez and Da Rocha families.

Elisée Soumonni argues that, if the experience and memory of Brazil constitutes the common heritage of Afro-Brazilian communities established in the various African localities they returned to, the prevailing sub-regional and local conditions of their establishment and further development must be taken into account in the construction of their community identity and their capacity of integration into their new social environment. It is these frequently overlooked prevailing conditions, responsible for the striking differences between Afro-Brazilian communities of the Bight of Benin that his paper primarily addresses.

With special reference to the Aguda of Benin, whose area of concentration was the epicenter of the infamous Slave Coast, the paper explores the origins of their emergence, focusing on the centrality and role of Felix Francisco de Souza in the slave-trading kingdom of Dahomey; the expansion of the community during the colonial and post-colonial periods; and above all, how they succeeded not only in constructing and keeping a community identity, but also in re-integrating into the new social order. In this last respect, it will be argued that religious syncretism, a survival strategy in Brazil, was equally helpful, back home.

Femi Ojo-Ade provides an insightful and critical review of 'Antonio Olinto's 'The Water House': Creative Configurations of Afro-Brazilian Return to Roots and African Culture'. This widely acclaimed novel comes in for Ojo-Ade's authoritative assessment of its merits and demerits.

Ana Alakija provides us with a window on to Afro-Brazilian social formations between Brazil and West Africa. She is an insider in these communities and has interacted exhaustively with Afro-Brazilian communities on both sides of the Atlantic; specifically Nigeria, on the African side. She produces a colourful tapestry of these communities and shows herself to be an authority on the subject

ENDNOTES

1. K.K. Prah. *The African Nation: The State of the Nation.* CASAS Book Series No. 44. Cape Town. (Second impression) 2009, pp 232-233.
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8. S.Y. Boadi-Siaw. *Brazilian Returnees of West Africa.* In, Harris. Op cit. p 292.
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1

THE CHALLENGES OF AFRICA AND BRAZIL:

Looking Ahead by Reconsidering the Record

ANANI DZIDZIENYO

INTRODUCTION

This paper takes a very broad approach to the subject of Afro-Braziliana, which is here conceived of as embracing the interconnectedness of both Afro-Brazilians – defined as Brazilians of African descent – and their progeny who returned to West Africa. Thus it becomes necessary to seek out direct and indirect linkages in the relationships of state and society at home and abroad, with extra attention to the ways and means through which Afro-Brazilians and Afro-Brazilian issues have been inserted into Brazil's relations with independent African countries since the early 1960s. This approach allows for a critical appreciation of historical connections and their deployment in contemporary relations.

My interest, then, has much less to do with the specific role of Afro-Brazilian-descended communities and their role within contemporary African polities where they are found; rather, I attempt to shed some light on the ways and means through which they can be seen as historical agents. Questions of contemporary agency are of course another matter. My hope is to make a modest contribution to the critical re-examination of the nature of African and Brazilian relations, one which pays attention to the presence or absence of Afro-Brazilians and underscores the exigency for transcending the disproportionate significance assigned to these historical connections.

This is a paper in four parts. Part one lays out the terrain of continental African and diasporic African relations in the early years and how Afro-Latin America indirectly makes an appearance. Part two looks at Brazil's relations with independent African countries and the obvious and not-so-obvious racial matters contained therein. Part three deals specifically with

the sojourn, in Ghana, of Raymundo Souza Dantas, in the early 1960s, and places him within the body of Brazilian contradictions, some of which are discussed in Part two and his own complicated reactions to solidarities in Ghana at the time. Part four takes a look, thirty years retrospectively, at the 1978 visit of the Asantehene to Brazil, as an illustration of Africa coming to Brazil, at a time of serious changes in Brazilian national politics. Taken together, the four parts aim to throw light on aspects of African and Brazilian relations which go beyond the usual examinations of this subject and implications especially those which do not get to some of the critical linkages between domestic Brazilian race relations and Brazilian presence and policies in African countries.

PART ONE

Ghana became independent on 6 March 1957. In the second year of Ghana's independence in 1958 – and some four years before the arrival of Raymundo Souza Dantas as Brazil's Ambassador in Ghana – Ambassador Emil Saint Lot, then permanent representative of the Republic of Haiti to the United Nations, visited Ghana as guest of Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah. His visit preceded the April 1958 Conference of Independent African States in Accra, the Ghanaian capital. Ambassador Saint Lot was probably the first Ambassador who was visibly Black from any country in the Americas to visit newly independent Ghana.

What the Ghanaian public and media made of this visit is not clear. Was there any special attention paid to the historic significance of Haiti in world history, and, even more so, the importance of Haiti for Ghana and African liberation? That Ambassador Saint Lot had been the Rapporteur for the report which ultimately became the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in the immediate post World War II period was not noted. 'Ghana Today,' a publication from the offices of the Ghana High Commission in London, merely featured a photograph of Ambassador Saint Lot and Mrs Saint Lot with Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah without any accompanying text. Did all of the above expose a serious gap in Ghana's Pan-Africanist interests, especially where the Diaspora was concerned? How did Haiti feature in the Ghanaian imaginary? Were there any Haitians in the country at the time of the Ambassador's visit? Were there any developments in the wake of this visit which signalled a serious recognition of Haiti's symbolic importance for Africa at home and abroad?[1]

It is known that by the early 1960s, there was at least a Haitian man of letters working at the National Theatre of Ghana, Monsieur Morissey Leroy.

There was at least a Haitian medical doctor, Dr Laurent, who was attached to the Ministry of Health. Whether or not Dr Francois Duvalier's election as President of Haiti in September 1957 had received any coverage in the Ghanaian press remains to be determined. Also to be determined would be the opinions of these distinguished individuals on their interactions with Ghana and Ghanaians, especially if there were any musings on Pan-Africanist ideas regarding racial solidarities. Now, fifty years since Ambassador Saint Lot's visit and the Conference of Independent African States, and forty-six years since Ambassador Souza Dantas's arrival in Ghana, it might not be amiss to pose questions which might help to unravel some of the complexities of Continental Africa's relations with the African Diaspora. It would be insightful to attempt to determine the extent to which state and society across the Continent have undertaken serious studies of Haiti's relevance to Africans and Brazil's significance for African countries as determined by Africans themselves. To a certain extent, the Continental African linkages with the United States of America are more visible and easier to contemplate, which does not necessarily imply that there is always clarity in the critical examination of this relationship.[2]

There is, arguably, a project in the making that would interrogate mutual reciprocities or the absence thereof as perceived by African and Haitian intellectuals, considering the historical import of Haiti for both the Diaspora and the continent. Such a project – which would transcend the merely historical and seek to seriously investigate the presence and absence of present knowledge and attitudes, both positive and negative – could open up further avenues of research which could make positive contributions to African Studies, globally speaking. Hence, these ideas are put forward as a way of introducing the subject of Continental and Diasporic relations, with particular reference to Brazil and the implications for re-examining the ways in which the past has often been used. It is entirely appropriate that the Ghanaian symbol of Sankofa, the bird with its head turned backwards, symbolizes this discussion. In 'Silencing the Past' Michel Rolph Trouillot underscored the ways in which the past could be taken out of historical perspective and thus reorganize historical narratives and analyzes to the advantage of some and the prejudice of others. Neither the recording of events nor their subsequent interpretation is a neutral matter ('Power and the Production of History,' 1995). The above observations lead us into a consideration of the role of race and colour in international relations and the significance attached to them.

Colour as manifested in international relations raises questions of multiple dimensions. For example: Is Brazil's acclaimed exceptionalism in

race relations based much more on what Brazilian race relations are not, rather than what they actually are? And does the existence of Africans of Brazilian descent shed any light on the time and context of their 'return'; or on present-day Afro-Brazilian realities?

At the time of the Brown v. Board of Education decisions (1954), the President of the City Council of Santos (São Paulo) wrote to the Embassy of the United States in Rio de Janeiro with the information that the Council had passed a resolution which noted with satisfaction the favourable decision of the U.S. Supreme Court 'establishing the just equality of all races is essential to universal harmony and peace. May the Consul of the great and friendly nation be officially notified of the Council's desire to partake in the rejoicing with which the said decision was received in all corners of the civilized world.'[3]

A Deputy in the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo had commented, 'The so-called American democracy, with the help of the world press, managed to hold itself out as the standard for other people. Brazilians, however, will always reject any restrictions which might be imposed on any Brazilian, whatever his origin, simply because he was born with a Black skin.'

But not even the eloquence of the members of the City Council of Santos and the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo provided any hints of the situation of Afro-Brazilians within Brazilian society at the time. Of course, the issue of Brazil's relations with African countries under colonial rule would not yet have arisen, much less the uses to which Afro-Brazilian cultural traditions could be put in Brazil's relations with European colonies. Thus Brazil had no foreign relations capabilities within the existing international system. To a certain extent, then, Brazil's use of history and African culture to present the country and its peoples to newly independent African countries was an innovation. The problem was not so much the idea as the way in which it was put into operation. Not assigning a conspicuous role to Afro-Brazilians by way of given proof, positive to the rhetorical flourishes, became a liability. One Afro-Brazilian ambassador in nearly half a century is quite a record.[4]

Brazilian relations with African countries have been characterized by an inability to reconcile internal race relations with its packaging for overseas consumption. The idea of Brazilian exceptionalism, which had been universally admired up to the point of entry into independent Africa and beyond, is a strongly held one. Because of a certain lack of familiarity with the contrary positions on the Brazilian race relations order – which are not necessarily products of bad faith, but are an effort to draw attention to

the multiple forms that racial inequalities can take (also because there has not been a consistent effort to hear Afro-Brazilian views on the African 'adventure') – Afro-Brazilians have not been seen to play key roles in the African adventure.

There has been a lacuna in national discussions which conspicuously excluded Afro-Brazilians. Perhaps the exception was Brazil at Durban in 2001. But, here again, there has been no visible evidence that post-Durban has seen greater participation of Afro-Brazilians. Of course, it is difficult to ascertain the degree of outside input into Brazilian foreign policy making. But, it is Africa and Afro-Brazilians being discussed here. Having missed the opportunity of creatively bringing cultural and historical factors to bear on African relations, it is not clear what can be done, short of reconfiguring the meaning of Africana – and the inclusion of Afro-Brazilians, not just one or two cabinet ministers in the Presidential entourages on African trips.

What might be even more challenging would be to make a dramatic gesture equalising or surpassing Janio Quadros' appointment of Souza Dantas.[5] That would finally put Brazil in the company of other American republics which have crafted their African relations in a manner which minimally recognizes and acts upon the role of racial factors: Afro-Cuban and Afro-USA ambassadors were appointed, both inside and outside Africa since the 1960s. However, no Afro-Brazilian has ever been appointed ambassador to any country.

PART TWO

To reiterate what Ince had noted in 1976, states cannot ignore the relevance of race in the international relations system. No matter how minimally, race or ethnicity enters the picture at some point in the conduct of foreign relations in a world made up of multiple races and ethnicities. Prieswerk outlines four scenarios where race and colour are manifested in international relations:

1) Relations between states of different races,
2) Domestic racial conflicts as a threat to international peace,
3) Internationalization of racially motivated movements,
4) Impact of racial groups on foreign policy.

Since Brazil itself is a multiracial state, multiracialism within international relations would appear to be axiomatic. However, Brazilian multiracialism has been raised to the equivalent of the non-consequentialness of racial

matters in quotidian life and, by extension, is absent from international relations. Furthermore, the question of domestic racial conflict does not arise under the circumstances. The third and fourth points are thus rendered moot. Ironically, perhaps, had Brazil not drawn attention to the significance of the cultural underpinnings to the African connection in its initial forays into early independent Africa, it might not have taken on extra significance.[6]

Making a big case of the exceptionality of Brazilian race relations and, even more important, the honouring of Black culture and history, inadvertently exposed the fact that Blacks are not represented at all levels of Brazilian society, that is, outside the predictable spaces of sports and entertainment. Even if Brazilians rejected comparison with the United States, it was inevitable. Initially, Brazil could be seen to possess certain advantages. Even a cursory consideration of post-abolition Brazilian race relations would reveal the absence of legalized racial segregation and outright racial violence perceived to symbolized U.S. race relations (images of lynchings, soldiers escorting Black children to school, to the accompaniment of visible hateful responses on the part of White mobs, and heavy-handed physical violence perpetrated by White policemen). Penha and Moraes Lessa (2007) note that in 1957, a Brazilian Foreign Ministry memorandum had discussed the African and Asian question and their implications for Brazil in a changing world. An initiative was recommended: to send a courtesy and observation mission to select African and Asian countries. These missions should include Brazilian citizens of Asian ('Oriental') descent, an Arab, and one who was 'typically African.' A follow-up report would suggest guidelines for future actions. The writer of this memorandum was a diplomat, one Sergio M. Corrêa do Lago (this is a name to be kept in mind, as it will reappear as this paper progresses).

What do all of the above have to do with Brazil's relations with African countries? Quite a bit, but in ways which are not readily perceptible. But then again, there has not been much by way of recognizable clarity in either articulating specific policy objectives, or general ideas beyond communiqués issued at the end of state visits. Thus an unusual and unintended alliance between official Brazilian initiatives towards African countries in which people of visible African descent continue to be distinguished by their conspicuous absence, and continental African cluelessness in the matter of the existing conditions of Afro-Braziliana have made for a drawn game, to borrow from football terminology. If this is the case, then it is worth observing that neither the interests of Brazil nor Africa are well served. Even if foreign relations cannot be predicted exclusively on a diet of history and culture, it is arguably the case that there had been some originality in

the initial ideas about Brazil making some advances in independent Africa. The problem was that there had been no real space for Afro-Brazilians, other than in exceptional cases. Raymundo Souza Dantas in Ghana was the primary example.[7]

Afonso Arinos, after whom the 1951 anti-discrimination law was named, had taught courses at the Instituto Rio Branco, and by his own account, he had tried to sensitize the future diplomats to the predicament of Black Brazilians. Lecturing to his students about racial matters in Brazil could not, however, have been a satisfactory substitute for having Blacks among the students at the Foreign Service Training Institute. The inability to make such connections was because they were not made in quotidian life on the home front. This left the planners and practitioners of the African initiative at sea in independent Africa. To this observer, then, reducing the failure of the African initiative to an unfortunate combination of giving privilege to culture and history in place of Realpolitik, strictly economic considerations and pessimism about continental Africa's post independence performance totally misses the point of Brazilian inability to come to terms with the idea that, to make sense in Africa, Brazil has to be seen to be making sense vis a vis Afro-Brazilians as well as continental Africans. Looming over the whole was the critical matter of Brazil's 'special' relations with Portugal, relations which were often couched in sentimental and affective terms, terms which were much more effusive than those for the emerging African relations. But there was a major difference: Portugal had an impressive constituency within Brazil. The advocacy role of the constituency and the influence it was able to exercise were not universally appreciated even in the Foreign Ministry. The bottom line was that there was no equivalent African and Afro-Brazilian constituency.

There is even an ironic twist to Brazil's position because it was Brazil that drew attention to the matter by placing emphasis on historic-cultural dimensions of new relations with early independent African countries and this made an issue of the whole African connection. What Brazil had not anticipated was the upending of what had been considered an enviable and universally recognized national asset. No amount of celebrating multiracialness and exemplary race relations at home could satisfactorily respond to what, in the case of other continents, would be merely a routine question: Where are the Blacks?

The genesis of the problem is located in the contradictory signals characterizing Brazilian presence in continental Africa since 1961. Raymundo Souza Dantas's infelicitous and 'condemned mission' to Ghana in 1961-1964, remains a compelling negative example. Ministerial appointments by

Presidents Cardoso and da Silva are revealing. Paying careful attention to the ministries where Afro-Brazilians have been sent by the two presidents does not exactly inspire confidence. Ministries of sports, social development, racial equality cannot be said to be at the core of the two administrations' agenda, the symbolic importance notwithstanding.[8]

The African initiatives invariably impact on the domestic race relations order, and equally significantly, on their interconnections to Brazil's relations with African countries. Here again the chasm between Brazilian official and unofficial articulations is impressive. Having chosen, unilaterally, to emphasize the significance of history, culture, and religion as 'fresh' variables in formulating policies directed at African countries, the formulators, the executors, and the domestic consumers had managed, consciously or not, to exclude from these policies Afro-Brazilians, who embody the connection to Africa. There has been no clear representation of Afro-Brazilians anywhere.

There is a still a Brazilian conundrum: How to transcend racial (colour) considerations abroad without action on the home front. Put differently, how are internal race relations to be separated from or reconciled to international race relations? A companion problem here is the value of 'cultural' matters. Separating cultural and political matters here is problematic. It implies, at a certain level, the existence of categorical choices facing Afro-Brazilians. Perhaps the situation could be more accurately characterized as one in which the search for the 'political kingdom' might begin in the cultural realm, the one more easily accessible to Afro-Brazilians interested in 'doing something' about their ambiguous position in Brazilian society.[9] This way, larger numbers come to engage in cultural activities that are linked directly or indirectly to Continental African provenances, and incrementally politicize such activities as they come to be associated with contemporary African countries and societies. What might be characterized as direct political articulation and the expectation of transforming such articulation into actual participation in Brazil begins with a minority of individuals who attempt to separate what they perceive to be more engagement with political processes as distinct from cultural manifestations.

Not having been saddled with the negative images usually associated with the United States, and later with South Africa, Brazil was certainly perceived differently at home and abroad. The recognition of this difference is just what it is: directly or not, the nature of race relations determined the available space for Afro-Brazilian action. And without historical constituencies of Afro-Brazilian organizations, which could be seen as being part of the legitimate public space and discourse in terms of political and

racial activities and representations, Afro-Brazilians could, from time to time, take advantage of 'openings' within the overall national system. Thus we are confronted with a fascinating irony: the erstwhile advantage of not being subjected to restrictive spaces based on legal segregation meant that there were no 'parallel' institutions of the type developed in the United States and in apartheid South Africa. Post-abolition 'nationalization' in Brazil did not produce the emergence of an Afro-Brazilian network of institutions with direct and indirect consequences for both Afro-Brazil and Brazil.

Once upon a time, Brazil had gone to Africa in search of slaves. Over the last five decades, Brazil has been traversing the African continent in search of 'trade' and other relations, for oft-stated reasons couched in terms emphasising historical and cultural links and ideas. As significant as President Lula da Silva's several visits to independent African countries are – more than any Brazilian president before him – (and despite appointing the first Afro-Brazilian to sit on the Supreme Federal Tribunal, including Afro-Brazilians in his cabinet), he has yet to match the record set by President Janio Quadros in the faraway days of 1961, when Raymundo Souza Dantas was sent as Brazil's ambassador to Ghana.

PART THREE

At the time of his appointment as Brazil's Ambassador to the Republic of Ghana in 1961, Raymundo Souza Dantas had already written seven books ranging from novels to biography. He was a professional journalist and had been part of the Afro-Brazilian Democratic Movement during World War II. His appointment generated controversy in the media partly because of allegations in some sectors that the enigmatic President Janio Quadros was indulging in 'reverse discrimination' by appointing a Black Brazilian to serve as ambassador to an African country.

Another point of contention was that Raymundo Souza Dantas did not belong to the Brazilian career diplomatic service. He was a political appointee.

Complicating matters even further was the fact that Souza Dantas himself did not necessarily view common ancestry (Blackness) as sufficient to obviate 'civilizational' and cultural differences between 'Westerners' such as himself and Continental Africans. It was not that he had never been involved in Afro-Brazilian causes; rather, he would not have described himself as 'militant'. His appointment as ambassador was supposedly only the beginning of an initiative which would help cement President Quadros's 'new opening' to newly independent African countries. That initiative was

not to be: President Quadros resigned after only seven months in office. Regardless of the contradictions and confusions of his short presidency, Quadros's unprecedented appointment of a Black Brazilian Ambassador remains a landmark in Brazilian diplomatic relations. There has not been another Black ambassador representing Brazil in a foreign country since then.[10]

An important, though not often remarked upon 'fact' from that period was that Janio Quadros's foreign minister was Afonso Arinos de Mello Franco, after whom the 1951 Afronso Arinos Law was named.[11] Thus there is a connection between Brazilian race relations on the home front and possible permutations or reverberations abroad. Upon reading Souza Dantas's *África Difícil: Missão Condenada: Díario*, one is tempted to draw the conclusion that the difficulties he experienced in Ghana had much less to do with Ghanaians, Continental Africa, or the usual maladies Europeans and the North Americans attribute to Africa. Quite the contrary; Ambassador Souza Dantas's troubles and nightmares were firmly lodged within the bosom of Brazilian society, its practices at home and their translocation to Ghana. The jocular manner in which he was offhandedly informed that he was to be an ambassador in 'Africa' (no need for country specificity) and the gross disrespect shown him by career diplomat Corrêa do Lago – to wit, his snail-paced vacating of the ambassadorial residence – were the true sources of his problems.

Ghanaians, on the other hand, were unstinting in spreading out the welcome mat and expressing solidarity with him. President Kwame Nkrumah himself pointedly called him 'brother' and assured him that there was no need for the barriers of protocol in his dealings with Ghanaians. It would seem that his blackness rather than his Brazilianness was what was recognized by other senior individuals in Ghanaian governmental and political circles, among them Senior Adviser to President Nkrumah on Foreign Affairs Michael Dei-Anang, Martin Appiah Danquah of the Ghana Farmers Council who had visited Ilheus and Itabuna in the cocoa regions of the state of Bahia and who inquired about Dantas's possible Ghanaian roots. A University of Ghana student pointed out to Ambassador Dantas the significance of the public attention President Nkrumah had shown him. The sheer fact of President Nkrumah himself publicly extending a conspicuously friendly welcome to him was indicative of racial solidarity. [12]

Ambassador Dantas did not fully appreciate the limitations of Brazilian race relations discourses abroad, especially in Ghana. Furthermore his own sense of coming from a different world, 'another place', and being the product of a different civilisation, the Western world, weighed on him. For

Ghanaian officials, it did not matter whether he was descended from Ewes or Asantes, because they considered him a brother. 'Feel at home' was an exhortation frequently conveyed to him on public occasions. By contrast, on his presumed 'home' turf he suffered humiliations meted out by the embassy staff who probably had no experience of serving under a Black Brazilian. But then again disrespectfulness toward him was even manifested in the way he had been informed of his appointment. Because of the scandalous and dismissive manner in which his appointment was announced in sectors of the Brazilian press, it is not surprising that he embarked on a difficult mission.[13]

Ambassador Dantas was caught between his Brazilianity and this novel way of being proudly and powerfully Black that he witnessed among Ghanaians. He spoke of his own 'discomfort' at being somewhat adrift among racial relatives who were not 'familiar' on account of national and cultural differences. Souza Dantas would hold no other diplomatic post, nor would he even be consulted about the whole Ghanaian sojourn, so one can only surmise the overall significance of this 'condemned mission'. He served at a time when Franz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral were in Ghana. He met Cabral at the Star Hotel in Accra. Overhearing a conversation in Portuguese, he turned around to recognize 'um tipo amulatado, cuja fisionamia não me era estranha' (a mulatto type who was not unfamiliar; page 91).[14] He also met Mario de Andrade (Angola) who berated Brazil for its fence-sitting and lack of initiative on Portuguese colonialism in Africa: 'Que bastaram declerações de intenções, reclemaram atos, atos, atos'. The ambassador wondered , 'Mas que atos?' Souza Dantas could not understand the depth of de Andrade's anger at what he perceived to be a lack of decisiveness on the part of Brazil.

On three occasions Ambassador Dantas met with President Sylvanus Olympio, the first president of Togo, who was himself a descendant of Brazilian returnees to West Africa. Eight months later, while on leave in Rio de Janeiro, the ambassador heard a radio broadcast reporting President Olympio's assassination. This was the second time the radio had brought him tragic news: The death of Brazil's ambassador to Nigeria, Luiz de Souza Bandeira, was announced on Ibadan (Nigeria) Radio. He had been at the post for only fifteen days.

The French ambassador, Grousset, had been very generous, inviting his Brazilian colleague to dinner while he was 'stranded' at the Ambassador Hotel for a month, waiting for Corrêa do Lago to vacate the residence. Such good and gratifying moments were few and far between. Perhaps the reception by the community made up of descendants of Afro-Brazilian

'returnees' in Accra was one of the most memorable episodes in that 'difficult' Ghanaian sojourn.

On balance, then, newly independent Ghana provided Ambassador Raymundo Souza Dantas a model of a new world, a Black world, where Black solidarity was recognized, even if those from outside Ghana and the continent to whom such solidarity was gladly extended could not comprehend its full import. In that environment, the nostrums of racial democracy and multiracialism were not able to trump pan Blackness. Of course, neither the ambassador nor Brazilians at home and abroad could fully fathom this. Thus the 'problem' was not Ghana, but Brazil. Perhaps a more fitting title for Souza Dantas's diario would be: 'How Brazilian Assumptions and Practices Ran Aground in Early Independent Ghana.' The question is: Have there been any discernible changes in Brazilian perceptions of and interactions with contemporary Africa since that time?

In conversations with Ambassador Souza Dantas in the 1990s, he displayed considerable candour about his stewardship in Ghana. Having arrived there without a full appreciation of the depth of Pan-African and pan-Black sentiments on individual and national levels, he could not respond spontaneously to the enthusiasm of Ghanaians; Brazilianness and especially his role as Brazilian ambassador were the paramount considerations.[15] Ghanaians saw a fellow Black man even if he was an ambassador, and proceeded to treat him as a 'brother', distinguishing him from other ambassadors. Perhaps, then, his very presence in Ghana broadened the idea of Brazil among Ghanaians, to include an element beyond the world of football and Pelé. Pelé was universally admired and Black folk especially admired him. But there was no immediate expectation of weighty expressions of Black consciousness from him. A Black ambassador, now was a different matter.

It is important to reiterate a point of difference between national idealized images and the relative success, or the lack thereof, in translocating them to foreign sites or environments. Thus an exemplary and much-lauded reputation for racial conviviality might not travel well where Continental Africans are concerned. In the absence of direct contact, there is a greater tendency to judge benignly places with people of African descent. But once knowledge becomes available and examples emerge of the existence of exceptional individuals – Pelé and Ambassador Souza Dantas – the question arises: So where are the Afro-Brazilians? The cover photograph for *África Difícil* shows four African masks. None of them appear to be obviously of Ghanaian provenance. Emphasis was on 'Africa' and these masks intensified the 'difficulties' and 'mysteries.' There was no map of the continent.

Ambassador Dantas expressed gratitude to the Ghanaian student Kwesi Enu Ansah for 'revealing much of the land to him' and to the Egyptian Joseph Sacrong for his 'loyalty and dedicated service to the Brazilian Embassy in Ghana.' In the course of his two years in Ghana, he made trips to Togo, Dahomey and Senegal. He recognized that early independent and republican Africa was not merely a collection of a dozen countries but a true mosaic. But ultimately he felt like a 'brother' from another place, time and civilisation.[16] *África Difícil* raises important questions about Blackness, Black transnationalism, racial solidarity and the conundrum of a 'Black ambassador from a white country.'

As far back as 1962 Eduardo Portella, one of the original 'Africanists', had pointedly written that Brazil was the largest African nation outside continental Africa.[17] Saraiva notes that the problem with Brazil's 'Africanity' is partly a function of the long silence, post-slavery, of Brazilian elite about the African continent. This contributed importantly to the harbouring of illusions about Brazil in Africa. Because of the influence of the Freyrean discourse in the shaping of Brazil's culturalist diplomacy in Africa, resulting in an effort to incorporate Africa into the concept of Brazilian nationality – 'through the kitchen' rather than through the 'living room' – an ambivalence about Africa has persisted.

But the case could, and should, be made that even more problematic for Brazil in this connection has been the complete absence of an active role for Afro-Brazilians in its relations with the continent. Thus the very Freyrean discourse and its contributions to the formulation and popularising of the notion of exceptional race relations on the home front would significantly undermine the effort to internationalize this discourse and its implications in Continental Africa. The culturalist line failed not because it was essentially culturalist but, I would argue, because Brazil's history of race relations and practices harboured basic contradictions and continental Africa simply offered a stage for manifesting them.

PART FOUR – OTUMFUO OPOKU IN BRAZIL, JUNE 1978

Let us now turn to an example of a very public demonstration of present-day relations between Brazil and the role of active cultural considerations. Delineating the political context in Brazil at the time provides an important background for understanding the significance of the visit at a critical time in Brazilian history.

In the mid-1970s, the Brazilian political landscape was shifting after a decade of military dictatorship. Faced with encircling oppositional and

contrarian activities and manifestations from all sides, President Geisel ultimately reasserted his power through what became known as the Pacote de Abril (April Package). This involved shutting down Congress for two weeks; promulgating indirect elections for a third of the Federal Senate; prolonging the law which limited electoral candidates to two hours of television time for the 1978 elections (a Lei Falcão, named after the then minister of justice); extending the presidential mandate to six years (from five); substituting a simple majority for the two-thirds required to pass constitutional amendments; legalising divorce (a victory for the long campaign of Senator Nelson Carneiro, RJ); passing the original constitutional amendment which had detonated the crisis in the first place (reform of the judicial system). The long- and short-term consequences of the pacote were mixed. Ultimately, they did not significantly dampen the increasingly vocal demands for change, nor did they stem the tide of protests. President Geisel had embarked on a programme of 'opening up' or loosening the stranglehold, but 'only gradually.' He had not interfered in the congressional elections of 1974, which became an indirect referendum on the regime and demonstrated the strength of opposition.

How to achieve or implement a 'democratic opening' in an institutionalized military regime without undercutting the base of this institutionalized power? What was to be done about suspended political rights of individuals, some of whom were such revered national icons as former president Juscelino Kubitschek? The stunning results of the 1974 elections showed how unsupportive of the regime large groups of Brazilians were – those who had been historically excluded from political participation such as workers and youth.

The response of the business community, one not historically linked to the excluded sectors, was revealing. They began to show more than a casual concern with quotidian business matters such as the increasing competition they faced from unwieldy state enterprises. The church's opposition to the regime, from another angle, complicated matters for Geisel: How was the regime to respond to the increasing interest of the church in human rights issues and concerns for human rights violations?

In addition to these worries, Brazil was facing the 1978 World Cup. After the glorious Tricampeão of Mexico 1970, 1974 the three-time champions lost the cup. Thus 1978 became another testing time for Brazilian football. That was a major national preoccupation in the Land of Football.

This was the Brazil to which the Asantehene came in June 1978. He was not the first important African visitor to Brazil. Emperor Haile Selassie and President Leopold Senghor had preceded him in the early 1960s.

THE VISIT

After Otumfuo and his entourage arrived at Rio de Janeiro's Galeão International Airport on Monday, 12 June 1978, on a Varig flight from Lagos, they were lodged at the famous Copacabana Palace Hotel on the waterfront.

The official rationale for Otumfuo Nana Opoku Ware II's six-day visit to Brazil was to strengthen mutual cultural affinities between Brazilians and Ghanaians. Furthermore, his presence in Brazil would highlight the significance of African contributions to Brazilian civilization as well as the coexistence of republican and monarchical institutions within the same bounded national territory of Ghana with its population of different ethnic groups and their traditional rulers. Additionally Otumfuo was, at the time, the president of the National House of Chiefs of Ghana, thus he was representing the traditional chiefs of Ghana, as well as the government of Ghana. After half a day of tourism in Rio de Janeiro, Otumfuo's party headed for the federal capital, Brasília, where Otumfuo met with President Geisel and opened an exhibition of Ashanti art and culture. He also met with the ministers of foreign relations and education.

The visit to the presidential palace and Otumfuo's audience with President Geisel received nationwide press coverage. He delivered an invitation from General Ignatius Acheampong, head of state of Ghana, requesting that President Geisel visit Ghana. Geisel noted that since he was nearing the end of his presidential mandate, he would pass on the invitation to his successor. He inquired about Otumfuo's impressions of Rio de Janeiro. In the course of the audience, gifts were exchanged: President Geisel received a traditional Asante stool (sesegua) bearing a silver inscription.

In the course of an official lunch at the Itamaraty Palace, Ambassador Dario de Castro Alves, secretary general and head of the foreign ministry, saluted Otumfuo and recalled historic African contributions to Brazilian civilisation. He also spoke of objectives and principles Brazil and Ghana shared in their bilateral relations, as well as the larger international arena.

Opoku Ware II opened an exhibition of Asante art and culture at the Palacio do Buriti in Brasília.

From Brasília, the party travelled to São Paulo, Brazil's largest city and its industrial capital. It is also home to the nation's most prestigious university, the University of São Paulo (USP). The head of the university or reitor, honoured Otumfuo's party with an official luncheon. There was a visit to the Museum of Modern Art. The Afro-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce hosted a reception for the visitors under the auspices of its founding president, the Afro-Brazilian congressman Alberto Camargo.

Salvador, Bahia, popularly called Bahia and said to be 'the most African of Brazilian cities' was the next stop, but because of air traffic problems at Rio's Galeão International Airport, the aircraft carrying the royal party was diverted to the city of Belo Horizonte and then back to Rio before finally departing for Salvador some three hours later. The outcome of this unanticipated problem was to throw the plans for Otumfuo in Salvador into confusion. Nevertheless, Otumfuo's party was received by the governor the next morning; later there was a dinner and cultural show. Instead of leaving for Rio de Janeiro on Saturday for further engagements, the party departed Salvador on Sunday afternoon, missing programmes at Rio's Yacht Club and a tour of Guanabara Bay by boat. Otumfuo's party departed from Rio on Sunday night on a flight to London.

The Brazilian press covered Otumfuo's visit with considerable interest. Writing in the weekly magazine *Manchete*, Atenéia Feijo described Otumfuo as 'nationalist,' 'the richest of traditional African chiefs' and 'the king of a republic'. Feijo observed that Brazilians, accustomed to state visitors who seemed constrained by the rigours of protocol, were surprised by Otumfuo's exuberance, his impressive clothing, the symbols of his power, ornaments and umbrella. His very presence was symbolic of a certain coexistence between republican and monarchical institutions in present-day Ghana, a relationship that has not always been peaceful. There were pieces of information about his background, education and favourable impressions of Brazil or at least of Rio; he remarked on the warmth of the people and the ecology which was reminiscent of Ghana (*Manchete*, 1 July 1978: 38-41).

Interestingly enough, in July 1978 the most visible public gathering of Afro-Brazilians was the launch of the Unified Movement Against Racial Discrimination in São Paulo, in front of the city's Municipal Theatre. As had been the case in an earlier period, Afro-Brazilians were inserting into the national political agenda the issues of their exclusion from the political process and racial discrimination.

One person present at this launch was the best-known Afro-Brazilian activist, Abdias do Nascimento, who was then living in self-imposed exile in the United States. He had been engaged in a public dispute with the official Brazilian delegation at the Second Festival of Black Arts and Culture in Nigeria in the previous year. He would later be present at both the Salvador and Rio de Janeiro openings of the exhibition of Ashanti arts and culture, as were other figures linked to the newly formed Unified Black Movement (MNU), such as Leila Gonzalez, perhaps the most visible Afro-Brazilian woman activist and public intellectual at the time.

The Salvador and Rio openings took on special significance not only

because of the greater visibility of Afro-Brazilians in these cities, especially Salvador, but also because of the presence of activists prominent in the newly launched Unified Black Movement.

The sheer visibility of Otumfuo and his party attracted considerable coverage in the Brazilian press as indicated above. That the emphasis had been on culture and cultural matters did not mean that politics was totally absent, at least, from the perspective of some Afro-Brazilians who considered the political dimensions of the cultural event. After all, having an African super dignitary in Brazil and on the front pages of Brazilian newspapers was an indication of a certain significance attached to Africa. It was not lost on these Brazilians that foreign Blacks could be honoured at the highest levels of society and polity in ways unimaginable for Afro-Brazilians within Brazilian society. At the time of the visit, Continental Africans were studying at the Foreign Ministry's Training School, the Rio Branco Institute. These students had no Afro-Brazilian counterparts. There were Africans studying at several Brazilian universities as there had been since the beginning of the 1960s.[18]

What remains to be determined are the long-term results of such visits. Are these merely the stuff of intermittent reiterations, which then get lost in the periods in between? Do they actually possess the potential for energizing a set of relations in which history and culture are meaningfully brought into present-day relations? Is there any possibility for reversing the continuing neglect of people of African descent and their general marginalization in Brazilian society; and how is the position of Blacks in Brazilian society linked to Brazil's relations with African countries? Is there a world beyond conferences and meetings, no matter how nobly conceptualized and situated in Bahia, the symbol of Africana in Brazil? If such questions were spot-on at the time of Otumfuo Opoku Ware II's Brazilian visit three decades ago (despite some changes, especially within the Afro-Brazilian universe), they continue to be perplexing. There is still no clear evidence of a special role for Afro-Brazilians in the context of Brazil's relations with African countries.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In April 2005 President Lula da Silva became the first Brazilian president to visit Ghana. This was his fifth visit to the continent since becoming president. On this fifth trip, he also visited Cameroon where the Brazilian embassy was re-opened; Senegal, the first African country to receive Brazilian aid against locusts and where the president formally apologized for Brazil's role in the enslavement of Africans; Guinea Bissau; and Nigeria, where Brazilian aid was supporting the production of anti-virals among other projects. According to Ghanaian press accounts, President Lula da Silva was given

a rousing welcome when he arrived in Accra leading a thirty-five-member delegation. Two of the ministers accompanying him were Afro-Brazilian: Gilberto Gil, the minister of culture, and Mathilde Ribeiro, the minister for the promotion of racial equality. President John Kufuor of Ghana was accompanied by his vice president, the minister of foreign affairs and other ministers, and the dean of the diplomatic corps, Ambassador Ibrahim Khali Omar. President Lula da Silva underscored the importance of cultural and trade ties, adding that the twenty-first century could be the time for Africa and South America. The Ghana-Brazil Chamber of Commerce was launched. President da Silva observed that Ghana ranked fourth in Brazil's trading with African countries.

At a state banquet President Kufuor described his Brazilian counterpart as a man of destiny who had earned worldwide acclaim for his commitment to change and social justice in Brazil and the global arena. He conferred the Order of the Star of Ghana on President da Silva, who in turn conferred the order of the Southern Cross on the Ghanaian president. There was the obligatory visit to Tabom, the community in Accra established in 1836 by 'returning' Afro-Brazilians. Blacksmithing, goldsmithing, tailoring, carpentry and architecture were areas in which members of that community had made significant contributions.

For the future, an agreement between UNESCO and the Brazilian government would ensure the restoration of a house in Brazil Lane which would function as a cultural centre. President Lula da Silva put on a kente cloth and a necklace as proof of his symbolic elevation to the position of a chief in the community of descendants of Brazilian returnees to Ghana. The Brazilian press in turn devoted space to pictures showing President Lula in his chiefly glory. Among future projects would be the offering of ten scholarships for Ghanaian students to study at Brazil's best universities.

Pointing out the activities of President Lula's visit is a way of underscoring the recent developments in Brazil's relations with Africa, especially Brazilian initiatives. The trope of Brazil as the biggest Black nation in the world, after Nigeria, was repeated in the coverage of the visit. Discussions in the Ghanaian press preceding President Lula's arrival read more like official statements, betraying little if any serious engagement with Brazil.

What, ultimately, is to be said about the role of Afro-Brazilians in relations between Africa and Brazil today? Can historical ties alone be considered indicators of the significance of these relations? The way forward is, arguably, an insistence on the recognition of the indivisibility of Africana, Braziliana and Afro-Braziliana in ways which are less fraught with idealized

notions. Hence, neither protestations of Africanity nor the celebration of the vibrancy of cultural continuities on both the continental African and the Brazilian sides would suffice. As Professor João José Reis's work has eloquently made manifest, the events leading up to 1835 and the Muslim Rebellion in Bahia and the ensuing political repressions cannot be separated from the way Africa and Africans were and have been viewed in Bahia and Brazil since then. That is a way of viewing the historical links which helps us remember an abiding need for not silencing the past as we contemplate the present and the future.

ENDNOTES

1. The Ghana High Commission in London's Information Section was the publisher of *Ghana Today*. 'High Commission' was the term used to describe the equivalent of an embassy among countries of the British Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is the name of the grouping of former British colonies and Britain whose titular head is the Queen. In recent years countries that were not former British colonies have joined the Commonwealth, for example Mozambique.
2. On the role of racial factors and the relations between the USA and African countries, see Mary Dudziak 2000.
3. Michel Rolph Trouillot 1995. Trouillot examines how silencing transpires in the matter of historical conservation in relation to the Haitian revolution.
4. Dudziak 2000. In the immediate post-independence period in Africa, U.S. foreign policy architects could not ignore the dialectic between internal and external race relations when dealing with Africans, especially when African diplomats began to appear in the USA.
5. Ibid.
6. See Prieswerk 1979.
7. Amazing as it is, to this day, (2008), there has been no other Afro-Brazilian Ambassador sent abroad by Brazil.
8. President Lula da Silva has appointed Gilberto Gil, musician, as Minister of Culture; Benedita da Silva, the first Black woman elected to the Brazilian Senate, as Minister for Social Promotion; and Mathilde Ribeiro as head of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Justice. President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President Lula's predecessor had appointed the football icon Pélé to head the Secretariat for Sports. Perhaps the most significant Black appointment was that of Dr Joaquim Barboza Gomes to the Brazilian Supreme Court. A multilingual jurist with an international reputation, he is the first Afro-Brazilian to serve on the bench.
9. There has been a long discussion about the divide between political and cultural

orientations in Afro-Brazilian activities. See Michael Hanchard 1994 and Emanuelle Oliveira 2008.

10. It was once suggested to this writer that there might very well have been other Afro-Brazilian ambassadors who may have preferred to remain 'incognito.' Until there are any revelations, Souza Dantas remains alone in that class. Furthermore, the suggestion could be treated as an example of the circumlocutions which bedevil discussions of Brazilian race relations.
11. Afonso Arinos de Mello Franco was a well-known jurist and distinguished parliamentarian. He was a member of the Senate in 1950 when he introduced the bill that eventually became the Afonso Arinos Law (1951). This made racial discrimination/prejudice in public places illegal. What was not in dispute was that the law was written in such a way as to effectively render it meaningless in terms of practical application. Its significance was that it became the object of protest and demand for a more effective law which would impact on quotidian race relations practices in Brazil. In later years, as the law was increasingly criticized by Afro-Brazilian activists and others, Afonso Arinos was not amused by what he considered to be a lack of appreciation for his efforts.
12. It is worth noting that Afonso Arinos had been Foreign Minister in the short-lived Janio Quadros government.
13. Souza Dantas had no doubt whatsoever about the shoddy treatment he had received from sections of the Brazilian press when he was nominated by Janio Quadros as ambassador to Ghana. See Souza Dantas 1964.
14. Souza Dantas, ibid., referred to Amilcar Cabral as 'tipo mulatado', a mulatto type whose appearance was not unfamiliar (to a Brazilian).
15. Eduardo Portella 1962.
16. Sombra Saraiva 1999:93,232.
17. In 1978 Monica Menezes de Campos became the first Afro-Brazilian to be admitted to the Instituto Rio Branco, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry's Training School. She died early in her diplomatic career in Costa Rica.
18. Portella 1962.

2

THE BAHIAN BACKGROUND OF THE AFRICAN RETURNEES

JOÃO JOSÉ REIS

Of all regions in the Americas, Bahia was probably the main importer of slaves through the ports in the Bight of Benin during the era of the Atlantic slave trade. The nineteenth century, when the majority of those slaves landed in Bahia, was also the period when many of those who had conquered freedom before dying, returned to West Africa to settle in cities such as Lagos, Porto Novo, Whydah, and Ague, among others.

This paper is a discussion of the Brazil those Africans left behind, a background that explains much of their choices when they reconstructed their lives in Africa. My story begins and ends in Bahia itself. Bahia was the main place of departure for those returnees, which is confirmed by Mônica Lima's recent counting. The Back-to-Africa movement from the region can be traced to the mid-eighteenth century, or maybe before, but it became a veritable surge in the months and years that followed the January 25, 1835 Muslim rebellion in the capital city of Salvador. From 21 departures in 1834, the number of Africans crossing the ocean east-bound increased to 453 in 1835, and to 432 in 1836. This was only the first big wave of returnees, a good number of whom had been expelled by the government in the wake of the revolt, and others followed suit to escape police repression.

In the years ahead, hundreds kept leaving, both attracted by the new 'Brazilian' settlements established in West Africa as well as to escape continued police and other forms of persecution. Many also ran way from economic tightness or they left for the sheer wish to go back home and die there.[1]

The city of Salvador, the capital of Bahia province, was the place from where the returnees embarked to Africa. Sir Robert Wilson, a commander in the

British Navy who had seen many lands and seas, wrote ecstatically when sailing into All Saints Bay in 1805: 'The view of this Bay ... is perhaps the most magnificent in the world.' 'No scenery of imagination could rival its grandeur and beauty', he added. Although Sir Robert was unimpressed by the city buildings and streets, he left the city regretting that it did not figure among Britain's many colonies. Claude Dugrivel, consular agent of France in Bahia, wrote in his 1832-33 diary that from his room at the Hotel Universo he saw what he considered 'one of the most beautiful views in the world.' 'It is forever summer,' wrote that foreigner who believed he had successfully ended his romantic quest for an 'earthly paradise.'[2]

Other foreigners who saw Salvador for the first time probably did not have the peace of mind to appreciate Salvador from an aesthetic or romantic point of view, although they probably felt alleviated that their voyage across the Atlantic was over. They arrived in Salvador too tired, too oppressed, underfed, and squeezed during several weeks in overcrowded, filthy, dark, and airtight holds of ships. Between 1800 and 1850, the number of Africans to disembark in Bahia was close to 360 thousand.[3] Besides being the port of entrance to slaves who would go on to serve in the sugar plantations, the city of Salvador would eventually became home to a great number of Africans who managed to obtain manumission from their masters.

Standing at one extremity of All Saints Bay, Salvador enjoyed a prime location for shipping. The sea could be viewed from its hilltops, as Dugrivel saw it, interrupted in the distance by islands, primarily Itaparica. Apart from those islands, the bay was embraced by the fertile Recôncavo region, where one of the hemisphere's most important plantation economies had flourished in the sixteenth century. Its sugar production was shipped from the port of Salvador to Europe, together with some tobacco, cotton, leather and other tropical products. The region had grown as part of the Portuguese Atlantic system, and Salvador was the Portuguese Empire's capital in the Americas until 1763, when Rio de Janeiro took its place.

Like Lisbon and Luanda, Salvador was divided into 'upper' and 'lower' cities by its rugged topography. The two levels were connected by steep hills that whites usually ascended installed in sedan chairs carried by blacks, until a public lift was built in the early 1870s. The going was particularly difficult during the rainy seasons, which brought landslides, cave-ins and flooding. Even under normal conditions, the lower part of the city soon did away with the favorable impression that European travellers enjoyed from their ships when observing the city's houses, churches and convents, whose white paint contrasted with the abundant greenery. Upon landing, travellers were assailed by their first disappointments. The narrow, rough, ill-paved, and filthy streets

contained open sewers into which all kinds of refuse were thrown, when they were not thrown directly into the sea by domestic slaves. The streets were also poorly lit by whale-oil lamps – a job again done by slaves – that frequently sputtered out, leaving the city's residents in the dark on moonless nights. At those times, people had to light their way with torches.[4]

Salvador was divided into ten parishes. Business activity was concentrated in the parishes of Nossa Senhora do Pilar and Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Praia (Our Lady of Conception of the Beach), both in the Lower City, which was the port district. The Beach parish was the heart of the commercial zone. Before the construction of adequate docks at the end of the nineteenth century, ships anchored at large, coming from other Brazilian provinces, and from Luanda, Benguela, Mozambique, from ports in the Bight of Benin, Portugal, Great Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Sweden and Denmark. Lighter vessels could reach the beach or the docks – canoes, launches and larger sailing boats called *alvarengas* and *saveiros*. They all transported products from the Recôncavo to the capital, or from ship to shore, and up until mid-century they were all manned by African sailors and oarsmen.

In a narrow street that ran between the sea and the warehouses and townhouses, crates of sugar, barrels of rum, bales of cotton, tobacco and piassava, sacks of coffee and some cocoa were piled high, ready for export. There were also stacks of goods imported from Africa, Europe, especially Portugal and Great Britain: manufactured wares of all kinds and shapes, textiles, tools, household utensils, shoes, barrels of beer and wheat flour (*farinha do reino*, 'from the kingdom', meaning Portugal), crates of wine, butter, olive oil, palm oil and salt cod. In Rua dos Ourives or Goldsmith Street, dozens of shops were exclusively devoted to the sale of precious and semi-precious stones. These and the local taverns and hotels were meeting places where newspapers were read aloud and discussions touched on local and national politics, the Atlantic economy, and general gossip. Many of the warehouses held slaves recently arrived from Africa, and displayed them in their doorways. Soon after arriving in Salvador, Claude Dugrivel was appalled by the sight of half-naked black men and women being put up for sale. Perhaps the Frenchman did not know that these captives might have been imported by their own countrymen, who were involved in the Bahian slave trade – such as the Gantois firm – just like other European nationals, mainly Portuguese merchants, besides Brazilians.[5]

There were also two large markets in the Lower City, the most important being Santa Bárbara, where both enslaved and freed Africans had their stalls. They displayed all kinds of goods, including monkeys, parrots and parakeets,

and British imports which could be purchased more cheaply there than in England, according to Sir Robert, who favourably compared these markets with Billingsgate, believe it or not. But the Swedish traveller Gustav Beyer was certainly exaggerating when he wrote that our docks and factories were 'as good as those in England.' With the exception of the large navy arsenal, Bahia's factories were nothing but small manufacturers of coarse fabrics, candles, glass, soap, cigars and snuff, generally located in and around the Praia district. Slaves were employed in rolling cigars, including two important leaders of the Malê rebellion, Pacifico Licutan and Luís Sanin.[6] The smell of tobacco was a characteristic of the Lower City; tobacco was a hallmark of Bahian culture that attracted the attention of a number of foreign visitors. Bahians, including women, were heavy smokers. And tobacco was the main currency used by Bahians in the purchase of slaves in West Africa.[7]

European visitors to Salvador repeatedly wrote that they thought they had landed on African territory. The city streets and wharves were filled with black women selling African cloth, ribbons and beads, other adornments and all sorts of food, both raw and cooked: fish, fruit, African cakes, puddings, stews, and dried whale meat. Prince Maximilian of Prussia, who visited the city sometime between 1815 and 1817, saw these women with their constantly burning portable stoves lined up on both sides of Praia Street, cooking and roasting food. African and local barbers, wood carvers, tailors, basket and hat weavers, all worked out in the open. Barbers also cut hair, doctored the sick with bleeding and leeches, and played musical instruments. African men, both slave and freed, gathered on street-corners to wait for customers who would hire them to carry large bales and barrels, or transport them in sedan chairs. It was extremely hard labour. In Sir Robert's opinion, '[I]t is scarcely possible to imagine a more distressing toil than the carriage of one of these huge sugar casks up the mountain in a heat of ninety degrees.' And it could have got even hotter. Those athletically built black men 'of uncommonly large stature' (to cite the British commander once again) tried to make their labour lighter and their life easier by working at a rhythmic pace to the sound of songs from their homelands. Later in the century Robert Avé-Lallemand observed that 'Everyone that runs, screams, works, everyone that transports [someone] or carries [something] is black'. And a few pages later he described Salvador as the 'metropolis of the negroes'.[8]

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Beginning in the mid-sixteenth and through the nineteenth centuries Bahia's economy was dominated by one export crop: sugar. It was around

sugar that plantations were erected, slavery adopted as a labour regime and society structured. Sugar was grown in the humid region that surrounds the Bay of All Saints, the Recôncavo, in the southern tip of which the city of Salvador was founded in 1549. Sugar planters represented the ruling class par excellence in both the city and the countryside; these planters were actually a kind of tropical nobility during the colonial era and, after Brazil became independent from Portugal in 1822-23, they would become a titled nobility, a method found by the Brazilian monarchy to guarantee support from that powerful class of powerful, slave-holding proprietors.

Bahian social hierarchy, however, was not formed only by slaves and sugar planters, and sugar planters were not the only slaveholding group in the region. A number of other social types occupied intermediary positions between slaves and planters. In the rural areas, they were small sugarcane, tobacco, manioc, cattle farmers, and miners; in the urban areas they were merchants, artisans, public employees, liberal professionals, religious personnel, free and freed peddlers and porters. Individuals belonging to those groups invested in slavery as a business, as a way of life or a means of survival, which was possible as long as the transatlantic slave trade remained open, which it did even after Brazil's official prohibition in 1831. It was a sign of absolute poverty not to own at least one slave in the first half of the nineteenth century, before the end of the Atlantic slave trade in 1850, that is, before slave prices soared. Only then investment by middling groups migrated away from slaves to go into urban property and interest banking savings.[9]

In both Salvador and the sugar plantation districts it was common for small slaveholders to own one, two or three slaves on whose work they depended to survive. Even ex-slaves invested in slavery, including Africans who, having obtained their freedom, became slave masters themselves. I have even located in the archives *slaves* who owned slaves, a property right that was not protected by law but which masters respected based on custom.[10] In that sense, before the end of the transatlantic slave trade, slavery in Brazil was a 'democratic' institution, so to speak, open for everybody, and nearly everybody who could afford had a foot in it. In a probate record sample of 395 individuals who left some property when they died in the first half of the nineteenth century, only 52 (13 per cent) did not own slaves, 256 (65 per cent) owned between one and ten, including 20 of the 25 Africans in the sample. Considering the numbers in this sample, socio-economic inequality was profound among the free and freed people. The 10 per cent wealthiest individuals in this group owned 67 per cent of the property registered in probate records, and the 60 per cent poorest controlled only 6.7 per cent.

If we set aside the bottom 30 per cent in the sample the result is dismal: they controlled only 1 per cent of the wealth. Individuals in this last group, however, left a mean value of property big enough to buy one slave in the period of legal traffic (until 1831). So they did not represent the very bottom of free society. The very bottom was actually occupied by people immersed in poverty, who lived off temporary jobs, private charity or alms collected at the doors of the many churches in Salvador and villages of the interior.[11]

Of course, the majority of Bahia's free population couldn't afford to have a slave. I have estimated that only between 20 and 30 per cent of the free adult residents of Salvador owned slaves in the first half of the nineteenth century, and African freed persons were represented among them. An 1849 partial parish survey indicates that only 22 per cent of African men and women, street earners and small merchants in their majority, owned slaves. So not every African freed person could afford or would somehow be willing to buy slaves.[12]

Unfortunately it is not possible to give precise numbers to these wealth groups. Population statistics is poor for nineteenth-century Brazil, and particularly for Bahia. An 1808 partial census of Salvador and 13 rural parishes – which excluded two important sugar plantation districts, Santo Amaro and Cachoeira –found a total of close to 250 thousand inhabitants, 63 per cent of whom were free or freed. Whites appear as 20 per cent, free and freed blacks and mulattos 42 per cent, and black and mulatto slaves 37 per cent. The proportion of slaves would have been greater had Santo Amaro and Cachoeira been included. Bert Barickman suggests that in the sugar districts alone there were perhaps 89,000 slaves in 1816-17. I estimate that the population of Salvador for these years was approximately 56 thousand inhabitants of which 42 per cent were slaves. Thus in only Salvador and the Recôncavo there were around 112,500 slaves at that date (1816-17). Considering a conservative 2 per cent annual growth of the slave population in the two areas, we arrive at 189,000 slaves at the time of the closure of the slave trade in 1850.[13] My estimate for Salvador's population in 1835 and the weight of Africans in it are displayed in Table 1.

Slaves made up 42 per cent of the population and of these 63 per cent, the overwhelming majority adults, had been born in Africa. African slaves and freed persons made up almost 37 per cent of the total population, maybe half of the city's adult inhabitants. Almost 22 thousand Africans lived in Salvador and of these 21 per cent were ex-slaves.

We can try to quantify the distribution of African slaves and freed persons according to their reconstructed ethnic identities in Bahia. That's what I have done in the following table.

Table 1: The Population of Salvador in c. 1835

Origin	Population	Percentage
Africa		
Slaves	17,325	26.5
Freed	4,615	7.1
Brazil/Europe		
Free Whites	18,500	28.2
Free creoles/mixed	14,885	22.7
Slaves	10,175	15.5
Total	**65,500**	**100**

Source: Reis, *Rebelião escrava*, 24.

Table 2: Estimated Ethnic Distribution of Africans in Salvador in 1835

Origin	Slave[1]	Freed[2]	Total
West Africa			
Nagô	5,388 (31.1%)	1,113 (24.2%)	6,501 (29.6%)
Jeje	2,668 (15.4%)	1,192 (25.9%)[3]	3,860 (17.6%)
Mina	1,681 (9.7%)	726 (15.7%)	2,407 (11.0%)
Hausa	1,611 (9.3%)	448 (9.7%)	2,059 (9.4%)
Tapa	503 (2.9%)	180 (3.9%)	683 (3.1%)
Calabar	381 (2.2%)	60 (1.3%)	441 (2.0%)
Borno	228 (1.3%)	97 (2.1%)	325 (1.5%)
Benin	156 (0.9%)	60 (1.3%)	216 (1.0%)
Other	–	74 (1.6%)[4]	74 (0.3%)
Total	12,616(72.8%)	3,950 (85.7%)	16,566 (75.5%)
West Central & East Africa			
Angola	1,763 (10.2%)	392 (8.5%)	2,155 (9.8%)
Cabinda	1,334 (7.7%)	83 (1.8%)	1,417 (6.5%)
Mozambique	693 (4.0%)	23 (0.5%)	716 (3.3%)
Congo	520 (3.0%)	65 (1.4%)	585 (2.7%)
Benguela	399 (2.3%)	88 (1.9%)	487 (2.2%)
São Tomé	–	14 (0.2%)	14 (0.1%)
Total	4,709 (27.2%)	665 (14.5%)	5,374 (24.5%)
Grand Total	17,325 (100%)	4,615 (100%)	21,940 (100%)

[1] Based on percentage distribution of slaves listed in probate records, 1819-1835. [2] Based on percentage distribution in lists of manumission records, 1819-1836. [3] Includes Africans listed as 'Makin' (Mahi) and 'Daomé'. [4] Includes Africans listed as Bariba, Guiné, Fulani, and 'Camarão'.

West Africans represented 75.5 per cent of the African community of Salvador in 1835. Four African nations alone – Nagô, Jeje, Mina and Hausa – accounted for 67.6 per cent of West Africans. The Nagô or Yoruba-speaking Africans represented close to 30 per cent of the African community and 10 per cent of the total residents of Salvador in 1835. Fifteen years later, at the closure of the Atlantic slave trade, their proportion had more than doubled to approximately 62 per cent of the Africans (64 per cent of slaves and 63 per cent of libertos), due to the intensification of the wars in Yorubaland and the consequent enslavement and sale of their victims to Atlantic slave traders. Supposing the proportions of Africans to the rest of the population remained the same, they now represented more than 20 per cent of the city's population of 75,325 – meaning that approximately 15,100 Nagôs lived in Salvador in 1850. Towards the end of the 1850s they came to form between 75 and 80 per cent of the Africans employed as hired slaves working in the streets of Bahia's capital city, thus becoming the typical urban labourers of Bahia. Probably because of this there was no need for Bahians to specify African ethnic names any longer, and the documents generally ceased to distinguish Nagô from Jeje (Gbe-speakers), from Hausa and so on. They now only mentioned 'Africans' every time they sought to identify blacks who had been brought from the other side of the Atlantic.[14]

As for the Jeje or Gbe-speaking groups, they dropped from 15.4 per cent of the slaves and 17.6 per cent of the libertos in 1835 to 6.8 percent of the slaves and 12.7 per cent of freed Africans in 1850. The Jejes as you will notice in the 1835 population data appear to have been more successful in achieving freedom, considering they were proportionately more numerous among the freed than they were among the enslaved Africans. This is partially explained by their longer stay in Bahia and their being in much higher numbers among slaves imported earlier in the century, while in the years before 1835 their number in the slave trade dropped as that of Nagôs soared, reinforcing the presence of slaves in the Bahian Yoruba-speaking community. Thus, 31 per cent of the Jeje as opposed to 17 per cent of the Nagôs were freed by 1835. The same logic applies to the Hausa, who came to Bahia in great numbers in the beginning of the century but their imports dropped substantially from the 1820s on. Although not as successful as the Jeje, 22 per cent of the Hausa were freed in 1835.

However we should not make too much of these numbers as an index of the relative success of particular African groups in obtaining freedom because to arrive at an answer to that question one would have to take into account detailed data on annual slave imports for each group, gender and age ratios, occupational distribution and so on, which I have not done at

this point. Some data is hard to come by. The age distribution of African slaves, for instance, are usually based on what we could call descriptive age, based on which, all that can be said is that approximately 65 per cent African slaves in Bahia fell under the description of prime-adult males.[15]

We can however say something about gender distribution. Among African slaves, only 40 per cent were women, and among the libertos this proportion was probably inverted: 60 per cent women. Female slaves be they born in Brazil or in Africa achieved manumission in proportionately greater numbers than did their male counterparts. Because of their more important role than men as domestic servants, women could more often than men develop personal relationships with masters and mistresses, relationships that with time would translate in the concession of freedom, often gratuitously. We can thus roughly estimate that there were close to 7,000 women and a little more than 10,000 men in the African slave population of Salvador in 1835; and (rounding up the numbers), among the freed Africans, 2,770 were women and 1,850 men in the same period.

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Most of the average 7,000 slaves imported annually into Bahia during the first half of the nineteenth century were taken to the sugar districts of the Recôncavo, and another small number were re-exported to Brazilian provinces north and south of Bahia. The others, perhaps between 5 to 10 per cent, remained in Salvador. In the plantations, men and women were employed in the cane fields indiscriminately, although certain tasks in the sugarmill proper were given to men and others to women. Men for instance worked in the crushing mills, the boiler and furnace rooms; women carried the cane to and from the carts, and in preparing the sugar loaves and pounded sugar, the final product in the sugar making process. Of course, they also performed domestic tasks at the planter's house, an occupation, however, which was more often given to creole women. Slaves could also be employed as field overseers, and even slave women – though rarely – could occupy that position. Apart from sugar plantations, rural slaves were employed in tobacco, cotton and manioc farms, cattle raising and subsistence crops. Many had access to local markets where they sold or bartered excess production from garden plots they were to have. Although slaves in general spent most of their time confined to the boundaries of a plantation, there was a lot of interaction between those belonging to different properties or residing in nearby villages. Documents related to the entire century provide evidence that sugar plantations were no concentration camps, completely closed to

the outside world, but it was not so due to the decision of slaves to jump over the fence of masters' territory, with masters' permission or not.[16]

Slave circulation, however, was periodically restricted, or rather restrictions were more carefully enforced at some moments, specially in the wake of slave revolts. During such times of white fear, failure of slaves to produce passes written by masters could result in arrests by the police and the penalty of up to 150 lashes, depending on the prevailing police edict at the time.

Privately, they were often submitted to all kinds of punishments for small or more serious deviations from plantation or household norms. Among the instruments of torture, were the more conventional whip, the iron collars positioned around the neck (for recalcitrant fugitives), hand and foot cuffs and so on. Master/slave relationships nevertheless were not devoid of negotiation.

Excessive work, insufficient or low quality food, lack of leisure time, prohibition of drumming and religious practices, sale of family members and maltreatment generally could lead to boycotting production, feigning illness, flights, suicide, individual and collective violence against masters such as food poisoning and outright rebellion. Slave resistance could lead to more punishment but also forced masters to open some bargaining space if they wanted to obtain peace in the slave quarters.

Certain forms of negotiation were institutionalized as part of the very culture of Brazilian slavery. For instance, a slave who fled temporarily or who desisted from his or her life as a fugitive could look for a freeman who would negotiate a safe return to his/her master, who in turn was morally obliged to accept, either to receive the slave without punishment or punish him/her mildly. The term by which this middleman or negotiator was known was 'godfather' (*padrinho*).[17]

All these things also happened in Salvador in the context of urban slavery, and even more frequently. But here slaves usually had more opportunity to carve out spaces of their own within and outside the bounds of slavery, beginning with the labour system itself. Slavery in the urban setting was primarily based on the hire-out system, that is, slaves employed as porters, artisans, vendors and the like contracted with masters a reasonable amount of money they would bring by the end of the day or more commonly by the end of the week. 'To pay the week' is the expression more often found in the documents. Everything that exceeded that amount slaves could keep for themselves. The arrangement was called the *ganho* or earning system and the slaves involved were called *ganhadores* or earners, if they were men, and *ganhadeiras* if they were women. After long years of hard

toil and disciplined savings – savings which until 1872 were not guaranteed by law – many were able to buy their freedom (this is how the freed African population that we saw above was primarily formed). Slaves-for-hire often didn't even live with their masters, but instead rented or sublet rooms from freed Africans who lived in the city centre, closer to the port area. These dark, humid rooms were usually located in the basement of Bahian colonial buildings and were called *lojas* (shops) whose upper stories housed white and mulatto families. According to the 1855 census, only 8 per cent of the *lojas'* residents were white.[18]

I have found in the archives slaves who lived on their own in Salvador while their masters or mistresses lived in the Recôncavo or in Lisbon. More often, there were those who circulated between Salvador and villages and plantations of the interior selling goods, including imported African fabric, to other slaves and freed Africans; from the interior they brought fowls, pigs, manioc flour, fruit and other agricultural products to sell in Salvador. They usually concentrated their business in the Recôncavo, which they usually reached as passengers in sailing boats or, later in the century, on segregated areas of steamboats. [19]

Much of the urban economic activities were shared by African slaves and freed persons, who worked side by side in the streets of Salvador. Freedmen very often simply kept the same occupations they used to have when slaves. Occupational networks, on the other hand, were formed along ethnic lines. On different occasions in the 1850s Bahian merchants complained that African farmers sold their produce to African middlemen who in turn sold to African street peddlers and merchants in Salvador, thus forming a chain of preference that resulted in virtual market control of certain products such as manioc flour, which was the Bahian staple food par excellence. Fish was another product whose sale was controlled by African women since at least the turn of the eighteenth century.[20]

In Salvador, Africans were primarily occupied in the transportation of all kinds of goods – from light envelopes to heavy sugar crates. They also transported people in sedan chairs, which, due to the hilly topography of Salvador – and of course the availability of cheap slave labor – were used instead of expensive horses and impractical carts. These labourers also organized themselves along ethnic lines in groups called *canto*, a term that means both song and street corner. And in fact the porters worked singing, and usually gathered in street corners to gain clients more efficiently. Each canto had a leader called captain, a man who would be familiar with the potential clientele, who negotiated payment, recruited *canto* members for particular tasks, and was responsible for his men before police authorities.

While waiting for clients *canto* members could dedicate their time to weaving baskets and ropes, sewing clothes, woodcarving, and other tasks. Many had more specialized occupations such as carpenter, bricklayer or smith and would take jobs in the transportation business when out of work in those activities. Often canto captains presided over a complete construction team that could be quickly mobilized when needed. The canto actually served as a kind of labour pool where employers could find different kinds of specialized workers, including cooks, shoemakers, tailors and sailors who they could hire on an individual basis.[21]

The *ganho* and the *canto* systems constituted the heart of urban slavery in Salvador. Although they were not organized in *cantos*, African women were preeminent in the *ganho* system especially as peddlers. They crossed the city north and south, east and west selling all kinds of cooked and uncooked food in shining glass boxes: they sold smoked whale meat and fresh sea fruits, Portuguese sweets such as cocada, African cakes such as acassá and aberém, besides abará, caruru. They also sold small trinkets, beads and probably cola nuts. In addition women worked out, sewing, washing and ironing clothes. In many, maybe most cases, they doubled as domestics and street earners. But they were particularly successful small-time merchants in which position they managed to accumulate capital to buy their freedom, open small shops, and own slaves.

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Both African women and men could earn part or most of their income from religious practices. I have identified slaves who were said to have bought their freedom with money obtained in divination and in curing witchcraft. Muslims earned good money by making and selling amulets which were popular among all Africans, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Spirit possession priests cured people from physical and spiritual diseases provoked by witchcraft, or established religious centres or Candomblé houses where they led initiates and attended clients who paid for services performed. Divination was one of the most characteristic services offered on the part of Bahian spiritual market controlled by Africans, and it was an activity in which both Muslims and Ifa priests were involved. Although there were no African-born Catholic priests, African Catholic brotherhoods also promoted some activities which eventually benefited their members economically, such as alms collection, patron saint's festivals, funerals, lotteries and so on. When these brotherhoods built or reformed their churches or altars, opened graves, contracted music bands they recruited African and black creole labour power.[22]

But it would be strange to consider Candomblé, Catholicism, and Islam only from an economic perspective, being as they were – particularly the first two – central institutions in so many aspects of African life in nineteenth-century Bahia. Candomblé is the term adopted in Bahia in the early nineteenth century to identify African spirit possession religions and private practices associated to it. It replaced the term Calundu, which was used until the late eighteenth century, although the precise date of the shift and the generalized use of the term Candomblé is something yet to be established. The earliest document I found which mentions Candomblé is from 1807, and is related to an Angolan man accused of being 'president of the dances of Candomblé'. The term Candomblé has indeed been linked to a Bantu origin, meaning prayer, in which case our 1807 Angolan priest serves as a confirmation. Possibly the term was not initially used by other ethnic groups to refer to their religious practices, but Bahians in general adopted it at the turn of nineteenth century.[23]

Slaves who professed African religions had obviously been in Bahia since the beginning of slavery in the sixteenth century, but in the nineteenth-century Candomblé became predominantly Jeje, Nagô, and Angola and it is no coincidence that these were among the largest African ethnic groups in nineteenth-century Bahia, with a reminder that the Angolans had preceded by at least a century the importation in large scale of the other two groups or nations. Different religious traditions of Gbe-speakers, Yoruba-speakers, and Bantu-speakers converged to form three basic cultural blocks which to this day mold the imaginary if not the liturgy of Candomblé houses in Bahia.

Nineteenth-century Candomblé rituals were performed in Bahia both by individual practitioners who gave consultations in their own private houses and by people who led hierarchically organized priests or priestesses gathered in temples or compounds. In this epoch these leaders were in the majority men, which pushes the celebrated phenomenon of female dominance of Candomblé to the following century.[24] The nineteenth-century Candomblé cult houses represented a more or less sophisticated structure which promoted disciplined possession rituals to the sound of drumming, a calendar of celebrations, and the initiation of members in the worshipping of specific gods and goddesses. In the everyday life of these temples, besides the obligations to the deities, divination and rituals of cure were regularly performed for outsiders. Nineteenth-century police records and newspaper are full of reports about these practices. It is clear that Vodun and Orisa religions were those traditions which since that time were considered the most prestigious, this being the reason why Bahia became a

kind of Brazilian Mecca of Candomblé, where people from other provinces converged for consultation with local priests or to be taught certain aspects of the dealings with the spiritual world. At the same time, religious experts travelled or moved to other provinces of the country, particularly Rio de Janeiro, both as captives sold southwards and as migrants searching for a better life elsewhere.[25]

Although Candomblé was persecuted by the police, some tolerance also existed on the part of members of both the police force and the population as a whole. This was partially due to the fact that Bahians in general, be they Afro-descendants or not, believed in the things which Candomblé was made of – they particularly believed in witchcraft and in the power that certain people had to make it work or make it disappear. They were also fond of divination practices, of good luck charms, of making life better through the invocation of help from supernatural beings, be they Vodun, Orisa Nkisi, Muslim jinns or Catholic saints. So African priests found in Bahia a fertile soil on which to plant their beliefs and practices, and found clients among those who sought them to solve problems of love, health, money, power, and oppression. Some of those clients were not the social underdogs. It could be a notary public in 1807, whose creole mistress was cured by a Jeje priest by the name of Dossu. It could be a police officer in 1830, accused of being a drummer in a Candomblé house; it could be 'people wearing blackties' in 1862, who sought a freed African diviner by the name of Domingos Pereira Sodré, a Nagô priest from the city of Lagos; or it could be a district police officer (a *subdelegado*) in 1868, who took his family to a Candomblé ceremony – and precisely that day a spirit got hold of him; or wives, who looked for ways of keeping their husbands faithful, slaves looking for herbs to control the ire of their masters, and masters seeking advise on how to find their absconded slaves. A mix of social characters rubbed elbows in the usually humble abode of African religious experts.[26]

Candomblé found protectors among free, white and mulatto people who had the means to protect it. Cultural alliances were thus formed between its priests and Bahians of all walks in life. These alliances eventually evolved into Bahians' direct involvement in Candomblé, not merely as clients but as initiates and even as priests. As early as 1807 there is news of a mulatto priestess by the name of Nicácia Nascimento who was a famous diviner-doctor, and in 1873 a white woman by the name of Maria do Couto was accused of being head of a Candomblé temple. Thus persecution of African religion in nineteenth-century Bahia went hand in hand with tolerance and adherence.[27]

Without abandoning the religion of their ancestors, Africans also

adopted the white men's religion. African Catholicism revolved around lay confraternities that were the chief vehicles for popular Catholicism in nineteenth-century Brazil. Confraternities were organized as a gesture of devotion to specific saints who, in exchange for their protection, besides daily prayers received tributes from devotees in the form of masses, processions and lavish festivals. Black brotherhoods were often subdivided along ethnic lines, and it could be considered a sort of ritual family just as Candomblé was. Mind that it was difficult for African slaves and even freed men and women to establish their own families. This could explain why in Bahia Africans extended the meaning of the word *parente* (relative) to include all members of the same ethnic group: Nagôs were said to be 'related' to other Nagôs, Jejes to Jejes, and so forth. In this strange land, Africans invented the concept of 'ethnic relatives' based on their redefinition of ethnic boundaries: instead of Oyo, Egba, Ijebu, they became 'relatives' under a *Nagô* ethnic umbrella; instead of Dahomeans, Mahi, Allada, they became *Jeje* 'relatives'. The brotherhoods represented an important piece in the formation of these new ethnic identities. Besides giving members a place of communion and identity, they offered them help in times of need, support when striving for manumission, means of protesting slaveowners' abuses, and last but not least dignified funeral rites.[28]

Brotherhoods may be viewed as a mirror that reproduced both ethnic alliances and ethnic tensions that existed within the African community at large. The important Brotherhood of Rosário das Portas do Carmo, organized in 1685 and still active today, was founded by blacks from Angola, but at the turn of the nineteenth century it already counted Creoles, Jejes and people from other ethnic groups among its members. However, the majority of Africans who arrived in Bahia and joined the organization during that period were Jeje, which did not prevent Angolans and Creoles – the oldest members of the confraternity – from monopolizing the administrative board. Despite being African-born, the Angolans gave preference to relationships with blacks born in Brazil rather than with the recently arrived Jejes. That may have resulted from how different culturally Angolans were from the Jeje. An aspect of that difference may have been that, unlike the Jejes, the Angolans came from regions which had been penetrated by Christianity since the early sixteenth century. Therefore many Angolans were old Christians in contrast with the majority of those slaves imported from West Africa.[29]

Africans adapted to and became vehicles for a type of Catholicism that was profoundly influenced by pagan practices. Englishman Thomas Lindley observed in 1804 that it was common for whites to wear scapulars as amulets – as well as using other kinds of amulets – to protect them against 'some

particular illness or alleviate a severe affliction.' It was also this Protestant who, attentive to Catholic devices, perceived a general 'fetishism' in the relationship between Bahians and their patron saints. 'It is astonishing' wrote Lindley, 'to see the veneration which these images create among the people, who really worship them as devoutly and abjectly as if they contained the essence of the Deity, descended on this occasion *in propria persona*.' Nearly four decades later, James Wetherell noted that, among the common people, blacks and whites used rosaries as talismans as well as *bentinhos*, Catholic amulets worn about the neck containing prayers or incantations, and outwardly decorated with a portrait of the Virgin, a patron saint or magical symbols. The chariest wore one *bentinho* on their chests and another on their backs to better protect their bodies. Even Senhor do Bonfim (Our Lord of Good Ending) ribbons, good-luck charms used around the wrist, still very popular today, already existed. All very similar to what African Muslims did with amulets containing Islamic prayers, passages of the Q'uran, and magical designs.[30]

This approach to Catholicism, I should insist, was not restricted to Africans or individuals of African descent, and Africans paid good attention to this. In 1831, a newspaper charged that a Spaniard named Agostinho specialized in 'making people's bodies invulnerable so that neither devils nor magic spells may enter.' For the price of 10,000 réis, the bewitched were cured with a beverage in which he had dipped a crown worn by the statue of a saint. That same year, a short distance from the parish church of Conceição da Praia, a justice of the peace stormed a house where he found several images used in divination, including 'a [figure of] Saint Anthony hanged with a rope.' Saint Anthony is a diviner who helps find articles and people that are lost or have never been found, such as husbands, wives, and fugitive slaves. If he was hanged, he could have been paying the penance for a botched piece of work.[31]

In a tradition dating from colonial times, popular religion, festivals and sexuality were intertwined. Even under the watchful eyes of Senhor do Bonfim, the city's unofficial, powerful patron saint, a highly permeable boundary between Paradise and perdition was established. After going to a Christmas festival on Senhor do Bonfim Hill, Thomas Lindley commented that Bahians in general – whites, blacks and mulattos—after 'clearing their consciences of old sins here, they commit new ones.' James Wetherell described the Bonfim festival as a veritable orgy. A third Englishman (James Prior, 1813) was impressed by the mixture of the sacred and profane in Bahian Catholic festivities. He recounted that, while inside the church of Bonfim, the priest celebrated masses 'with the greatest solemnity,' while

outside, 'muskets, fire-works, drums, tambourines, clarinets, and shouts of the people form the constant chorus...' Africans no doubt were behind much of what went on during these celebrations. On January 14, 1835, while the Muslims planned a revolt, one Vicente Pires and other Africans asked the permission of the Salvador Municipal Council 'to celebrate the Senhor do Bonfim using their dances and drums.' That kind of festivity was typically organized by black Catholic brotherhoods.[32]

During the celebrations of black confraternities, the sacred and profane were frequently juxtaposed and occasionally intermingled. In addition to holding processions and masses, they organized feasts, masquerades and elaborate ceremonies that were not mentioned in their statutes, and during which black kings and queens were enthroned and duly fitted out with royal garb and insignias. These fictitious monarchs held ceremonial posts, as if the brotherhoods were an African kingdom. They were not, but brotherhood kings and queens did have a good dose of real authority among Africans. The official attitude towards these Afro-Catholic displays swung between repression and permission. In 1846, a municipal judge stated that a brotherhood devoted to St. Benedict, a black saint, had existed in the town of Cairu, southern Bahia, housed in the local Franciscan convent, and where black brothers annually organized 'a coronation on the holy day.' The ceremony included 'a King with a cloak, crown and scepter, and a queen with the same royal insignia, accompanied by dances and many people who even make promises when occasioned by illness.'[33] As is frequently the case, the conquered had made their mark on the conquerors' culture to the point where the latter – or at least some of them – could identify with the former's culture. If the extraordinary nature of these celebrations seeped into daily life, they primarily represented an escape from daily life through rituals that symbolically inverted the social order African style.

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While some Africans inverted social order symbolically, others tried to invert it for real. Such was the case with African Muslims. From the beginning of the nineteenth century Muslim Hausa slaves were imported in large numbers to Bahia, which is reflected in the ethnic distribution of Africans displayed in Table 2 p39. They had been victims of religious conflicts in the Central Sudan, namely those initiated in 1804 by the jihad led by Usuman Dan Fodio. Muslim slaves from Borno, Nupe and Yorubaland also ended up in Bahia as armed conflict spread through the Central Sudan region. These slaves, separate or in alliance with non-Muslim slaves, engaged in a

series of revolts beginning with an aborted conspiracy in 1807 and ending with the 1835 rebellion, both in Salvador. The first movements – in 1807, 1809, 1814 and 1816 – were led or entirely forged by the Hausa and they took place inside or in Salvador, its outskirts or in the plantation region. In the 1820s the Nagôs replaced or allied with the Hausa to unleash several rebellions, not all controlled by the followers of Islam (The 1826 revolt in the suburbs of Salvador and several plantation revolts were not the work of Muslim slaves). The 1835 revolt, of course, was predominantly a Muslim Nagô or *imale* movement, although here again not only Muslims were involved. The Nagôs who figured as the main and most numerous leaders were probably from Ilorin, the bastion of Islam in Yorubaland, which was deeply involved in the conflicts that shook Yorubaland in the 1820s and 30s, beginning with the 1817 Hausa slave revolt in Oyo instigated by Afonja, the Bale of Ilorin and Are Ona Kakamfo (or commander-in-chief) of Oyo's provincial army.[34]

The 1835 revolt revealed that Muslims formed an important, prestigious sector of the African community in Bahia, and Islam seems to have been expanding with special force among the more numerous Nagô slaves and freedmen. The revolt was organized around Muslim Nagô workers who, directed by the most literate among them, gathered in the cantos, in rooms and houses rented or built by slaves and freedmen. Besides reciting prayers and passages of the Qur'an, and exercising Arabic writing, Muslims used these meetings to conspire, to project a world in which they would be on top. They planned to assault the city, and take the movement to the sugar districts where the majority of slaves lived. Although led by Muslims, non-Muslim slaves were also invited to join the rebellion and many did. No Brazilian-born blacks participated. The rebels had few arms, primarily long knives, and a couple of shotguns. As a protective measure, they wore Muslim amulets, made with pieces of paper written with passages of the Qur'an, strong prayers, diagrams and figures used in Islamic divination practices. As an additional protective tactic, they also buried amulets along the way they were to pass during the revolt.

The conspiracy was denounced only a few hours before becoming an uprising. No more than 600 warriors presented arms. In the fierce and unequal fight that followed in different parts of the city, at least 70 Africans died, and the revolt was put down after a few hours. Some rebels were arrested during the fight, as well as hundreds of suspects in the days after the revolt. These arrests were indiscriminate, even though the most wanted Africans were those known to be Muslims. The possession of amulets was the main evidence used by the police to identify rebels, a poor criteria

because Muslims and non-Muslims alike wore them for their own safety as good luck and protective charms, not only against the soldiers' bullets or the masters' whip, but against all kinds of evil spiritual and human beings.

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Punishment against the 1835 rebels varied from death penalty (suffered by four Africans, but initially given to 16); to sessions of up to 1,200 floggings, prison terms, and deportation to Africa. At least two died during flogging sessions. As for the deportations, the Bahian government created a law, which was immediately supported by the Imperial government, allowing for the banishment for life of freed Africans who were suspect of belonging to the rebel party but against whom no evidence could be found for their indictment. In other words, freedmen and women found innocent were in any case expelled from the country because they had for some reason initially being fingered as 'suspects'.

In addition, some Africans who had been condemned to prison terms requested and had their sentences changed to deportation. The original plan included in the text of the law, was that all African ex-slaves would be eventually sent back to Africa, an idea which was not put in practice because of its impracticability. Instead, in the years and even decades that followed the 1835 rebellion the government would deport freed Africans selectively, concentrating on those who deviated from the predominant social and cultural norms of Bahian society, namely those accused of involvement in petty crime, vagrancy, prostitution, African drumming, religious practices, witchcraft, and so on.[35]

For those who stayed behind, the most lasting impact of the anti-African measures adopted involved the prohibition of Africans to own real estate property. This measure was reinforced by the provincial legislature in 1847 after lapsing for a while. The same law no. 9 of 13 May, 1835, subjected African labouring men and women to a head tax of 10 thousand mil réis specifically created for them. Other laws were passed that promoted their exclusion from certain sectors of the labour market and a more strict governmental control of street workers, the majority of whom were Africans. The latter was a 1836 measure that prohibited Africans from freely electing their labour gang leaders, which would from then on be chosen by the parish justice of the peace. This measure did not stick because Africans simply disobeyed it systematically. Some of these policies were adopted immediately after 1835, others in homeopathic doses afterwards. In 1850, for instance, when the chief of police in 1835 became president of Bahia

he forbade Africans, slave or freed, from working in the lighters that carried the merchandise unloaded from ships. In 1857 the city council prohibited African slaves and freed persons from selling staple food in the municipal market.[36]

Almost decades after the Malê Revolt, Africans continued to feel the burden of having been born on the other side of the Atlantic. A municipal ordinance dated 1859, for example, punished with a fine or, alternatively, eight days in prison any African freed person found in the streets after 9 pm unless he/she carried a pass written by a 'Brazilian citizen'.[37] Legal discrimination covered many fronts. Africans could not meet for drumming and dancing, they could not celebrate births, marriages or deaths in their families. At the same time that their divertissements were forbidden, they were barred from places of allowable divertissement. They could not enter the opera house to watch plays, concerts, boxing, hypnotism presentation, and even abolitionist meetings where abolitionist poems were recited one after the other.[38]

The African community was thus subjected to growing official pressures which fed already existent racial and ethnic prejudice. This situation explains why the back to Africa movement continued long after the 1835 events had passed. Bahia elites did not act only out of fear of rebellion, to be sure. They had a more encompassing plan to 'deafricanize' Salvador, and some were explicit about it. Africans and their culture, many argued, represented an obstacle to civilization. European civilization, of course. Thus, the 'spontaneous' migration of African freed persons back to Africa, sometimes with a stop in Rio de Janeiro or other provinces of the Brazilian Empire. These people, it should be emphasized, formed an elite group. They were entrepreneurial, competitive, skilled labour force. Some were rich, like Luis Xavier de Jesus, whose property amounted to the equivalent to 200 slaves in 1835. He was caught in West Africa at the time of the rebellion, tried to return but was forbidden by Law number 9, which established that no free or freed African could reenter Brazil. He kept trying to return until he died twenty years later at Whydah while waiting for a ship to take him back to Bahia. In one of his petitions to the Bahian government Jesus argued that Brazil should accept residence of someone like him who, freed from slavery, had managed through hard work and business acumen to amass a substantial fortune. Jesus' argument reached deaf ears.[39]

There was no evidence that Luis Xavier de Jesus was a Muslim, but Muslims were of course the hardest hit ilk in the aftermath of the 1835 rebellion. Muslims went underground but continued to be a distinct part of the African community. In the 1840s a few were interviewed by the

French consular official Francis de Castelnau, and they told him stories of their imprisonment in Africa and the trade routes they followed before being sold to Atlantic traders in a Bight of Benin port. In the 1850s James Wetherell also interacted with African Muslims, receiving from one of them a notebook containing Islamic writings, the kind of cultural artifact that, according to the Englishman, Bahians feared because they were ignorant. In the 1860s the Iman Abd al-Rahman al-Baghdadi, born in Bagdad but under the service of the Turkish navy, visited Salvador on request of its Muslim community, which he found to be very large but poorly disciplined in the tenets of Islam, and he condemned particularly women's behavior, for they not only disobeyed their husband but often did not follow their religion. Gone had been the days of rebelliousness. Muslims now had compromised, and Islam was quickly losing ground to Candomblé and Catholicism in the hearts of Africans and especially their descendants. Iman al-Baghdadi himself testified that the sons of Muslims did not follow the religion of their fathers but instead those of their mothers, which he identified it as being Catholicism. It could well be Catholicism, but not exclusively. Finally, the fact that Muslim men married non-Muslim women was eloquent evidence to the decline of a more rigid form of Islam in Bahia. If we imagine – and I believe that was the case – that in Bahia there occurred what al-Baghdadi saw in Rio de Janeiro in the mid 1860s and reporter João do Rio would see at the turn of the twentieth century, literate Muslims competed with Candomblé people for clients in the witchcraft and divination market. In other words, no more Islamic militancy.[40]

As the century progressed, the numbers of Africans decreased. With the second, harsher law against the Trans-Atlantic slave trade in 1850, and decline of the sugar industry in the 1860s, slaves were sold in large numbers to Rio de Janeiro, and many African freedmen and women migrated to the same destination in search of better economic opportunity. Or they went back to Africa. Africans were also getting old and dying. On the eve of emancipation in 1888 only about 4,000 Africans, most of them already freed, lived in a Salvador, which now displayed 140,000 inhabitants. Their work groups were no longer exclusively African, but mixed with national blacks and mestizos. The Africans, now old, kept migrating back to their homelands. And the movement continued after abolition. In 1897, medical doctor and anthropologist Nina Rodrigues described the following scene, with which I finish this chapter:

> It was taken by a very deep emotion that I saw, in 1897, a group of elderly Nagôs and Hausas, very near the term of their existence,

> many with uncertain steps and covered with gray hair ... walk through the city in great noise, to embark to Africa, in pursuit of a peaceful grave in the same place where they were born. A doleful impression was that one caused in me by those folks, foreigners in the midst of a people who saw them get old under captivity and who now ... watched, indifferently or taken by a superficial curiosity, that moving spectacle of the return home of the remains of a race ruined by slavery.[41]

ENDNOTES

1. Mônica Lima e Souza, 'Entre margens: o retorno à África de Libertos no Brasil, 1830-1870', PhD. Dissertation, Universidade federal Fluminense, 2008.
2. Sir Robert Wilson, 'Memoranda of S. Salvador of Bahia (1805)', in H. Randolph, *Life of General Sir Robert Wilson* (London: John Murray, 1862), i: 342, 348; Sir Robert Wilson, 'Letter from Bahia, 10 November, 1805', in *idem*, 273, 275; A. Dugrivel, *Des bords de la Saône à la baie de S. Salvador* (Paris: Librerie Ladoyen, 1843), 361, 382, 384. These are impressions by foreign travellers who are not frequently cited. Other travellers would agree with them. See Moema P. Augel, *Visitantes estrangeiros na Bahia oitocentista* (São Paulo: Cultrix, 1980), *passim*. This is the best guide for travellers' literature in nineteenth-century Bahia.
3. The data comes from the Slave Trade Voyage Database, www.slavevoyages.org (accessed on October 7, 2008).
4. Sir Robert Wilson, 'Letter from Bahia', 273, 277; Gustav Beyer, 'Ligeiras notas de viagem', *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfico de São Paulo*, 12 (1908), 276; James Prior, *Voyage Along the Eastern Coast of Africa* (London: Sir Richard Philips & Co., 1819), 100-2; George Gardner, *Travels in the Interior of Brazil* (London: Reeve Brothers, 1846), 74; Daniel P.Kidder, *Sketches of Residence and Travels in Brazil Embracing Historical and Geographical Notes of the Empire and its Several Provinces* (Philadelphia: Sorin & Ball, 1845), ii: 19; Robert Dundas, *Brazil; including New Views of Tropical and European Fever* (London: John Churchill, 1852), 202, 203; James Wetherell, *Brazil. Stray Notes from Bahia* (Liverpool: Webb & Hunt, 1860), 7, 145.
5. On the slave trade connections of Bahia, see the classical study by Pierre Verger, *Flux et reflux de la traite des nègres entre le golfe de Benin et Bahia de Todos os Santos* (Paris: Mouton, 1968).
6. João José Reis, *Rebelião escrava no Brasil: a história do levante dos malês em 1835* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2003), 287-93. There is an English version of this book, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The 1835 Muslim Uprising in Bahia* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

7. On the last three paragraphs, see Kátia Mattoso, *Bahia: a cidade do Salvador e seu mercado no século XIX* (São Paulo: HUCITEC, 1978), *passim*; Dugrivel, *Des bords de la Saône*, 342; 361-2; Thomas O'Neill, *A Concise and Accurate Account* (London: R. Edwards, 1809), 51; Beyer, 'Ligeiras notas de viagem', 276; Sir Wilson, 'Memoranda', 343-4; Prior, *Voyage*, 102, 104-5; Wetherell, *Brazil*, 32, 86-7, 148; 'Commercial Report, Bahia, 1836', British National Archives, Foreign Office, 13, 139, fl. 44.
8. Maximilian Wied-Neuwied, *Viagem ao Brasil* (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1940), ii: 450-1; Sir Robert Wilson, 'Memoranda', 344, and 'Letter from Bahia', 273; Wetherell, *Brazil*, 21, 33, 53-4; Dugrivel, *Des bords de la Saône*, 365; Kidder, *Sketches*, ii: 21-1; Robert Avé-Lallemand, *Viagens pelas províncias da Bahia, Pernambuco, Alagoas e Sergipe (1859)* (Belo Horizonte: Itatiaia; São Paulo: EDUSP, 1980), 22, 31.
9. Kátia Mattoso, *Bahia, século XIX: uma província no Império* (Salvador: Nova Fronteira, 1992), 612-6, 634-8. The argument has been forcefully made for Rio de Janeiro as well by Zephyr Frank, *Dutra's World: Wealth and Family in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004).
10. See João José Reis, *Domingos Sodré, um sacerdote africano: escravidão, liberdade e candomblé na Bahia no século XIX* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2008), 228-32. Slaves often bought their freedom by offering other slaves to replace them. See Maria Inês Côrtes de Oliveira, 'Viver e morrer no meio dos seus: nações e comunidades africanas na Bahia do Século XIX', *Revista USP*, 28 (1995-96), 187-8; Mieko Nishida, *Slavery & Identity: Ethnicity, Gender, and Race in Salvador, Brazil, 1808-1888* (Bloomington e Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 79-84.
11. On the probate records sample results, see Reis, *Rebelião escrava*, 30-3. On poverty in nineteenth-century Bahia, see Walter Fraga Filho, *Mendigos, moleques e vadios na Bahia do século XIX* (São Paulo: HUITEC; Salvador: EDUFBa, 1996).
12. Reis, *Rebellião escrava*, 367-70.
13. Reis, *Rebelião escrava*, 21-2; B. J. Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint: Sugar, Tobacco, Cassava, and Slavery in the Recôncavo, 1780-1860* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 128.
14. Maria Inês Côrtes de Oliveira, 'Retrouver une identité: jeux sociaux des africains de Bahia (vers 1750 – vers 1890)', Thése de Doctorat, Université de Paris IV (Sorbonne), 1992, vol. I, annexes. Based on probate, police partial population surveys, and other records, students of slavery in nineteenth-century Bahia found that the distribution of slaves according to their African origins are not in agreement with what one finds in the online Slave Trade Voyages Database. I believe that numerous slaving voyages which were declared to originate at ports in West Central Africa (namely the coast of

present day Angola) and East Africa (Mozambique) actually originated in Bight of Benin ports, a misrepresentation traders created to circumvent the prohibition of the slaving expeditions above the Equator line. For this reason the STVD found that 73.4 per cent of slaves who disembarked in Bahia between 1819 and 1835 were from West Central and East Africa, while they appear as only 27.3 per cent in probate records for the same period. My long experience in Bahia's archives tells me that the latter data is much closer to reality.

15. João José Reis, 'População e rebelião: notas sobre a população escrava na Bahia na primeira metade do século XIX', *Revista das Ciências Humanas*, 1 (1980),148-149.
16. On plantation slavery in Bahia, see two superb books by Stuart B. Schwartz, *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of Brazilian Society: Bahia, 1535-1835* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), and Barickman, *A Bahian Counterpoint.*
17. See João José Reis and Eduardo Silva, *Negociação e Conflito: A Resistência Negra no Brasil Escravista* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1989); Reis, *Domingos Sodré*; Reis, 'Tambores e tremores: a festa negra na Bahia na primeira metade do século XIX', in Maria Clementina Pereira Cunha (ed.), *Carnavais e outras f(r)estas: ensaios de história social da cultura* (Campinas: Editora da UNICAMP, 2002), pp. 101-155; *From Slavery to Freedom in Brazil: Bahia, 1835-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); Luis Nicolau Parés, *A formação do candomblé: história e ritual da nação jeje na Bahia* (Campinas, Editora da UNICAMP, 2006); Renato da Silveira, *O candomblé da Barroquinha: processo de constituição do primeiro terreiro baiano de Keto* (Salvador: Maianga, 2006); and Walter Fraga Filho, *Encruzilhadas da liberdade: histórias de escravos e libertos na Bahia (1870-1910)* (Campinas: Editora UNICAMP, 2006), among many others.
18. Cecília Moreira Soares, 'As ganhadeiras: mulher e resistência negra em Salvador no Século XIX'. *Afro-Ásia*, nº 17 (1996), pp. 57-71; Maria Inês Côrtes de Oliveira, *O liberto: seu mundo e os outros* (São Paulo: Corrupio, 1988); João José Reis, 'Street Labor in Bahia on the Eve of the Abolition of Slavery', in José Curto and Renée Soulodre La France (eds.), *Africa and the Americas: Interconnections During the Slave Trade* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005), 141-72; and Ana de Lourdes Costa, '*Ekabô*!: Trabalho escravo e condições de moradia e reordenamento urbano em Salvador no século XIX', dissertação de Mestrado, Faculdade de Arquitetura da UFBa, 1989.
19. João José Reis, 'La révolte Haoussa de Bahia en 1807: résistence et contrôle des esclaves au Brésil', *Annales* 61: 2 (2006), 383-418.
20. João José Reis, 'The Revolution of the Ganhadores: Urban Labour, Ethnicity and the African Strike of 1857 in Bahia, Brazil, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 29: 1 (1997), 355-93.
21. Reis, 'Street Labor in Bahia'; Reis, 'Ethnic Politics Among Africans in Nineteenth-Century Bahia', in Paul Lovejoy and David Trotman (eds.), *Trans-*

Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora (London: Continuum, 2003), 240-64.

22. Nicolau Parés, *A formação do candomblé*; Silveira, *O candomblé da Barroquinha*; Rachael E. Harding, *A Refuge in Thunder: Candomblé and Alternative Spaces of Blackness* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000) ; João José Reis, 'Differences et Résistances au Brésil de l'esclavage', *Cahiers d'Études Africains*, 125: 32, (1992), 15-34.
23. João José Reis, 'Candomblé in Nineteenth-Century Bahia: Priests, Followers, Clients', in Kristin Mann and Edna Bay (ed.), *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 116-34.
24. Ruth Landes, *The City of Women* (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1994).
25. Gabriela dos Reis Sampaio, 'A história do feiticeiro Juca Rosa: cultura e relações sociais no Rio de Janeiro Imperial', PhD. Dissertation, Unicamp, 2000; Richard Graham, 'Nos tumbeiros mais uma vez? O comércio interprovincial de escravos no Brasil', *Afro-Ásia*, nº 27 (2002), 121-160; Roberto Moura, *Tia Ciata e a Pequena África no Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: FUNARTE, 1983).
26. Rachel Harding, *A Refuge in Thunder: Candomblé and Alternative Spaces of Blackness* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), 80-5; Reis and Silva, *Negociação e conflito*, 54-5; Reis, 'Candomblé in Nineteenth-Century Bahia', 128, Reis, *Domingos Sodré, passim.*
27. Reis, 'Dono da terra chegou, cento e cincoenta acabou'?: Notas sobre resistência e controle dos escravos na Bahia que recebeu a família real em 1808', *Revista USP* (forthcoming); Reis, 'Candomblé in Nineteenth-Century Bahia', 121.
28. Lucilene Reginaldo, 'Os Rosários dos angolas: irmandades negras, experiências escravas e identidades africanas na Bahia setecentista'. Tese de Doutorado, UNICAMP, 2005;Sara Oliveira Faria, 'Irmãos de cor, de caridade e de crença: a Irmandade do Rosário do Pelourinho na Bahia do século XIX', MA thesis, Universidade Federal da Bahia, 1997; Reis, 'Ethnic Politics'.
29. Jefferson Bacelar and Maria C. de Souza, *O Rosário dos Pretos do Pelourinho* (Salvador IPAC, 1974). We must reject Carlos Ott's biased conclusion that Crioulos were the true leaders in this important brotherhood due to the Angolans' 'inferiority complex'. See Ott, 'A Irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos do Pelourinho', Afro-Ásia, 6-7 (19680, 120, 121).
30. Thomas Lindley, *Narrative of a Voyage to Brazil* (London: J. Johnson, 1805), 55-7; Wetherell, *Brazil*, 18-9, 114, 122.
31. *Nova Sentinela da Liberdade*, 32 (15 Sept., 1831); Arquivo Público do Estado da Bahia, *Juízes de Paz, 1ª Vara, 1830-31*, maço 2681.
32. Lindley, *Narrative*, 55-7; Wetherell, *Brazil*, 94; James Prior, *Voyage Along the Eastern Coast of Africa to Mozambique, Johanna, and Quiloa; to St. Helena to Rio de*

Janeiro, Bahia, and Pernambuco in Brazil, in the Nisus Frigate (London: Sir Richard Philips & Co., 1819), 103; AMS, *Atas da Câmara, 1833-35*, vol. 9.41, fls. 164v, 166v. Other prohibition of dances during the second half of the eighteenth century is mentioned by Maria Helena Flexor, *Oficiais mecânicos na cidade do Salvador* (Salvador: Prefeitura Municipal do Salvador, 1974), 224.

33. Francisco Xavier Figueredo to the Provincial President, 30 November, 1846, APEBA, *Juízes de paz*, maço 2296.
34. The Malê revolt is detailed in Reis, *Rebelião escrava.*
35. See Reis, *Domingos Sodré*, chaps. 1 and 4.
36. Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, *Negros, estrangeiros: os escravos libertos e sua volta à Áfric* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985); APEBa, *Câmara de Salvador*, 1404.
37. *Posturas da Câmara Municipal da Cidade de S. Salvador, capital da Província da Bahia* (Bahia, Typ. De Manoel Agostinho Cruz Mello, 1860), 20. Other laws that discriminated against Africans are found in *Legislação da Província da Bahia sobre o negro, 1835-1888*, Salvador, Fundação Cultural do Estado da Bahia7Direção de Bibliotecas Públicas, 1996.
38. *Correio Mercantil*, Rio de Janeiro, 12 Oct. 1854.
39. On Luis Xavier de Jesus, see Pierre Verger, *Os libertos: sete caminhos na liberdade de escravos da Bahia no século XIX* (Salvador: Corrupio, 1992, 55-60); ' Reis, *Rebelião*, 485-91.
40. Francis de Castelnau, *Renseignments sus l'Afrique Centrale et sur une Nation d'Hommes à Queu Qui s'y Trouverait. D'aprés le Rapport de Négres du Soudan, Esclaves à Bahia* (Paris: P. Bertrand Libraire-Editeur, 1851*);* Wetherell, *Brazil*, 138*; 'Abd al-Rahman al-Baghdadi, Tasliyat al-gharib: The Foreigner's Amusement by Wonderful Things*, translated to English by Yacine Daddi Addoun, York University, Harriet Tubman Center, 2001, unpublished; João do Rio, *As Religiões do Rio* 2d ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Nova Aguilar, 1976), 23.
41. Nina Rodrigues, *Os africanos no Brasil*, 4th ed. (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional,1976), 153-4.

3

BETWEEN SHORES:

Brazil and the Return of Former Slaves to Africa, 1830-1870[1]

MÔNICA LIMA[2]

'The best place for the freed Africans and their free descendants, residing in the Empire of Brazil, to go to and found a town, a civilized population, is the place called Cabinda, on the South West Coast of Africa, in the Latitude of five degrees and forty minutes south of the line, because the natives of that place had been desirous, for many years, to acquire European Civilization, as a proof of which they send their sons to Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco to learn to speak, read, and write the Portuguese Language, they also wish that civilized men of colour should go and join them for the purpose of assisting a population with a civilized form of Government.'

Joaquim Nicolau de Brito, Rio de Janeiro, 1851.[3]

'Among the free portion of the descendants of Africa, numbering about four or five millions, there is enough talent, wealth, and enterprise, to form a respectable nationality on the continent of Africa ... It is theirs to betake themselves to injured Africa, and bless those outraged shores ... We need to collect the scattered forces of race, and there is no rallying ground more favourable than Africa.'

Edward Blyden. New York, 1862[4]

'Without the intervention of a state like in Sierra Leone, nor of philanthropic organizations like in Liberia, the settlement on the African shore was carried out by released slaves as well as their sons, and daughters in this part of the 'Black' continent and the results of this voluntary migration do not seem to be inferior to those engendered by the colonies founded by England and the American Companies.

Elisée Reclus. Paris, 1887.[5]

Joaquim Nicolau de Brito, a freed slave born in Africa, was the sender of a letter written on behalf of more than a hundred released slaves, who requested the support of the representatives of the English government for their trip to, and settlement in Cabinda, in the West African coast. Little is known about his personal life, but the document signed by him reveals his aims and the companions he stood up for.

The letter, which was written in Rio de Janeiro on 4 July 1851, contains detailed information on the reason why they chose this destination, as well as a development project that they intended to implement. Furthermore, it described its members as workers specialized in different professions who were able to pass on their expertise, and be role models in the societies to which they were willing to migrate.

Correspondence exchanged by British representatives identifies the group planning to travel to Cabinda as mostly formed by 'freed Congo.' In Joaquim Nicolau's letter, however, they do not label themselves in these terms. Instead they classify themselves as 'freed Africans.' In the same document, the released slaves mention that their descendants born in Brazil were part of the group – labelled the 'free descendants.' When expressing their motivation, they asserted that they intended to combat slave trade in Cabinda by means of setting a successful example of free labour by engaging in the cultivation of agricultural products destined for exportation, consumption and commerce with merchants from several parts of the world.

The money acquired from their work would be aimed at repaying the money invested in helping them in their trip and settlement in Cabinda. In addition, the freed Africans believed their success as entrepreneurs in the area of agriculture, and trade would draw the natives' attention to this kind activity. They stated that, besides fighting slavery, they would also search for ways of freeing those who were slaves there. Their main objective consisted of introducing a new civilization through redeeming the Africans who were prisoners of living conditions that harmed them.

The author of the second quotation is Edward Blyden, who was the son of freed Africans, born in 1832, in a Presbyterian family in the Virgin Islands. He wrote proposals and gave speeches in Western Africa and in the Americas, on the future of the African continent and its descendants in the New World. He carried out research on African History so as to refute 'the delay myth.' He tried hard to study, understand and connect to African Islam, and took part in a campaign meant to promote the return of freed slaves – Africans and their descendants – from the Americas back to Africa.

His first famous pamphlet about this issue was written in 1851, and published in 1856. It was given a suggestive title: 'A voice of bleeding Africa,

on behalf of her exiled children.' Blyden is a prominent example of the beginnings of the pan-African thought. His transatlantic experiences on both sides of the ocean enabled him to produce reflections and projects that connected Black people on the two sides of the huge sea. Blyden adopted ideas which were similar to the values of the freed Congo mentioned in Joaquim Nicolau's letter. He asserted that the Black men from the Americas could offer an important contribution to the African societies, the same way as they had done for the construction of the New World throughout, but under compulsion.

Élisée Reclus, a French geographer and anarchist activist, is the author of the third quotation. He studied Geography with a focus on human relations in space. He wrote part of his masterpiece (*Géographie Universelle*) in jail, after being arrested for taking part in the Paris Commune (1871), joining the militia as a soldier so that he could fight Versailles. The work of Reclus, therefore, brings in its approach peoples and situations that are not in the focus of the best known books of geographic synthesis at his time. He dedicated some pages to describe the Brazilian communities of the Gulf of Benin as agents towards the progress of Africa.

The three citations refer to a reality that had been forming in the relationship between the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, on a particular intensity in the nineteenth century. These are the movements of 'return to Africa,' made by freed Africans and their descendants from the Americas.

RETURN AND RETURNEES

These migrants are commonly called returnees in the 'back to Africa movement,' even if the return was not a 'real' one, in that for some of them, it was a journey to the land of their ancestors for the first time. These are the cases of African descendents that joined the return trips. Still, 'return' is a concept that includes the symbolic representations that the destination localities in Africa have become for those born in the Americas. It can be considered as a return – to the land of origin of their parents. So, the term return will be used here, despite reservations, but conscious of its strength as an image and concept.

BETWEEN THE SHORES

This chapter is the synthesis of some aspects of a doctoral thesis, defended in March 2008 at Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil, about the return of freed slaves in Brazil to Africa between 1830 and 1870. The work analyzed the volume, intensity and profiles of freed Africans and their descendants that migrated to the continent from the ports of Rio de Janeiro and Salvador.

The thesis also included an analysis of the places of destination chosen and the reasons for these choices. The approach seeks to articulate the spaces bordering the Atlantic, considering that this approach is fundamental to understanding the process. The object of study is not configured exclusively on one side or the other of the ocean, but on the transatlantic relations that existed between the two shores.

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY

The interpretations about the returns of the freed slaves in Brazil back to Africa have some milestones of change over time, and also common denominators. The changes reflect very much the focus of historiography on African slavery in Brazil and the Americas, which in recent decades has become a field of academic interest. The studies on the strategies for the survival of the captive and the released; the means of obtaining freedom and the struggle of slaves in the nineteenth century have provided an explanatory basis for a better understanding of the history of the returnees.

However, observations on the Brazilian shore alone, provided a one-sided explanation of the phenomenon of return – namely, their preparations and motivations for the journey. But it has proved of little value to the understanding of these migrations, like a reflux of the slave trade. It became necessary to understand the reasons for the choice of destination and how these choices were determined by the relationship between the Atlantic coasts of Brazil and Africa. So, the African historiography has become another indispensable source.

THE VOICE OF THE SOURCES

The research of the sources in the French colonial archives showed overseas reports of missionaries, travellers, members of colonial forces (military and civil) who lived in and attended the West African coast in the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century. They inform us that this community was identified as 'Brazilian subjects', though many had left Brazil as foreigners (as recorded in the book of passports in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Sometimes called criollos in military reports, and sometimes 'Blacks of Brazil,' they were mostly identified as Brazilians. This identity is located in an intermediary place between the natives and foreigners, or as a special kind of foreigner with local ties, a background of native languages and even indigenous origin of birth.

Almost all the studies on the movements of the freed slaves who returned to Africa consider the Brazilian or the African situation that would have facilitated, or even encouraged the migration processes. On the African

side, the research focused particularly on the region of the Gulf of Benin, where the returnees had built a strong community. The point of departure of these researches and works has always been the existence of the community of Brazilians in the West African coast, which drew attention by the way they appeared in the local society.

The Aguda community of Benin, the Tabom of Ghana, or simply the Brazilians – including even those of Togo and Nigeria – are visible results of the strength of these communities, and their social agents. The confirmation of their existence over time, reaching until today, is what led most of the social scientists and historians to understand their history.

THE SIDES OF THE OCEAN

On the Brazilian side, the pressure on the freed Africans – often treated as undesirable from the year 1830 – is seen by the most recent historiography as one of the reasons for the movement back to Africa. This idea gives the return a strong bias of a non-voluntary attitude. Of course, it is understandable on account of the repressive atmosphere of the second half of the century, 1830 onwards. The return to Africa would arise almost as a form of non-explicit deportation, as an undesirable way of exit, made by sectors of the Black population, given the many restrictions imposed on them. This line of interpretation also focused on the majority of exits toward Africa that occurred from the port of Salvador – Bahia, where, especially since 1835, the local government had intensified measures of control and repression against the freed Africans.

From the African side, there was the presence of those migrated from Brazil, who were established on the West African coast since the eighteenth century. In some cases, they even became close to African chiefs, and occupied very important positions in local societies. These first Brazilians, in the so called 'Costa d'Africa,' created extended families and a group of dependents around themselves, which gave them power and influence. Moreover, they dealt with the local chiefs and offered exchanges for their support, favours and services.

Those first Brazilians and their people actively participated in the Atlantic slave trade and acted as a focus of attraction for those freed and liberated from Brazil. Brazilian returnees were put under their protection, and also under the influence of the most powerful chiefs and kings there. To be part of this Brazilian community on the West African coast was a guarantee against re-enslavement. At the same time, it offered the possibility of a promising economic and political position. The place occupied by the Brazilian community assured a way of insertion on arrival, and offered a

point of contact and reference, that certainly directed the movements of return.

ROUTES TO WEST CENTRAL AFRICAN PORTS

This type of relationship between the two sides of the ocean, built over the Atlantic slave trade, existed not only on the West African coast. The port of Luanda (Angola) was linked to Rio de Janeiro through business and kinship, with constant contact between people.

However, the records of the freed Africans who went to Luanda did not reveal any strategies of travelling in groups; they existed and are registered as individual movements. It is also true that the city of Luanda was one of the most 'creolized' ports on the Atlantic coast of Africa. For that reason, someone who returned from Brazil, speaking Portuguese, with the experience of the Middle Passage and Brazilian slavery, would be much more easily absorbed in local identities. The city of Luanda was, in the nineteenth century, a Portuguese area and not subject to the African kingdoms or linked to African peoples in particular – as was the case of Daomé or Yoruba towns.

There is also the case of Cabinda Bay. There, in the seventeenth century, new kinship groups emerged from the combinations of old lineages, which were powerful in local kingdoms, with groups linked to the slave trade. New kinship groups were born of such relations; and these new lineages will find a way to the strengthening and expansion of their power on the arrival and establishment of communities of returnees. The creation of the community was a mechanism for expanding the power of the lineage group.

It is also worth highlighting the size and the process of arrival of the freed slaves which came from different parts of the Americas, with groups coming from Brazil and the Caribbean most likely going to the region surrounding the Bay of Cabinda – where villages such as Pernambuco, Povo Grande, Puerto Rico and Matinika (Martinique) were created.

ATLANTIC CONTEXT

At a particular moment of History, when the Atlantic world was filled with social movements, and ideas of freedom crossed the ocean, the return of the freed Africans served as inspiration for the redemption of African societies. This idea seems to have become a factor in stimulating the returns.

The new posts which were created could be occupied by those people and groups that dominated the code of the Atlantic world. The foundational ideas that fed the back-to-Africa movement seem to have reached the Brazilian ports in the mid-nineteenth century, as the speeches

and guidelines presented in sources reveal. It is difficult to imagine how those 'contamination of ideas' could have happened if the two shores of the ocean were not linked, or if the relation between the two shores of the ocean was not widely known.

Therefore, it is considered appropriate to use the concept of 'connected histories', from which the dynamics of the process of organizing the returnees expanded the local and regional contexts (in Brazil, the Americas and Africa) to wider contexts – considering those spaces as a whole and in the perspective of the transoceanic network. This is not to deny the previous analyses, but just to incorporate them and possibly amplify them. This new approach came from some new data and a proposed analysis more expanded in geographical terms. There is a 'third' shore[6] of contact, interactions and influences in that river called Atlantic.

CHRONOLOGICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITS

The focus of the research was the period that seems to be central to the four decades of the nineteenth century – central, because it is really in the middle of the century (two decades before and two after 1850), and because there were major changes in relations between Brazil and Africa and Africa and the Americas at that time.

These are decades of great intensity considering the arrival of enslaved Africans in Brazilian ports. It is also important to note the intense illegal slave trade activities after 1831 and the extinction of the Atlantic slave trade in Brazil and the Caribbean regions after 1850, with consequences in mainland and overseas; on the two sides of the ocean, it was also a period of social and political unrest.

In Brazil, for example, that was the time of the rebellion of Carrancas in Minas Gerais, and of the insurrection of Malês in Bahia, at Maranhao. There was the Balaiada with the quilombo[7] of Negro Cosme; the revolt of Manuel Congo in the Paraiba Valley (Rio de Janeiro province); the quilombos at the basin of Iguaçu (Rio de Janeiro province), and a number of other actions by slaves and freed Black people.

Consequently, it was a time of violent repression of those movements, and likely suspects – many of them former slaves. Restrictive legislation was designed to deal with this movement. Still, in political debates, the right of freed slaves born in Brazil to citizenship was quite heatedly discussed. But there was a widespread understanding that virtually denied that possibility for the Africans – without considering the fact that those people were not in Brazil because they wanted to be there.

At the same time, there were some changes in the economic field.

Opportunities were created by the growth of urban activities from the years 1830. This gave part of the Black urban slave population opportunities to earn money, particularly through providing services in skilled trades. During the 1830s and 1840s, freed people could rise through work in various sectors of Brazilian cities.

DIFFERENT MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE RETURNS FROM BRAZIL

We could observe different moments in the lives of freed Africans in the middle of nineteenth century in Rio de Janeiro. In the 1830s and 1840s, one could see an increased number of freed Black people working in various sectors of Brazilian cities. Sometimes they could earn enough money to live on their own, and obtain the freedom of family members, and buy properties in urban areas. During this time, it can be seen in the register of testaments, they could even save money for their funeral and some cash. Thus, a few freed Africans could also get money to plan a return trip to Africa. Of course, it was not easy, but possible.

In the years after 1850, the situation began to change for freed Africans and African-descendants in terms of upward social mobility. Life became more difficult for them, especially after the arrival of White immigrants from Europe. Limits were imposed on the circulation of Black workers in urban areas. The so-called 'good society' wanted to modernize the central areas of the cities and did not want Black people to be so visible.

During that period, especially the years immediately following the end of the slave trade in Brazil, there was a considerable increase in the Black population, African and creole[8], in the Brazilian cities. The middle of the nineteenth century is considered the start of 'Black cities'[9] in Brazil. These towns became hotbeds of social movements and the local governments tried to control the feared people of colour.

In this period many events took place: the Black strike of 1857 in Salvador (studied by one of the most important historians of Brazil, Professor João José Reis)[10], the uncountable quilombos[11] in the outskirts of the capital of the Brazilian Empire, and many political actions against the so-called 'gatherings of Blacks', where escaped captives and freed slaves could be in a 'permanent state of conspiracy.' Government representatives, government officials and part of the so called 'good society' were on the other side of the tense race relations, and often considered these events as protests and urban conflicts.

For many of them, the solution was sending the 'undesirables' back to their land of origin – Africa.

A HECTIC PERIOD IN BLACK AMERICAS

The Black Americas also experienced a hectic period. The Caribbean was the scene of slave rebellions, with the participation of many freed captives. For example, the rebellion in the province of Matanzas and the insurrection of La Escalera between 1843 and 1844, both in Cuba, involving hundreds of slaves. These uprisings were followed by harsh repression and strengthening of the discourse that supported the deportation of the rebels – real or suspected – as a solution to contain the 'Black wave.'

The well-known odyssey of the ship *Amistad*, led by the African Cinque, who wanted to return to Africa on a slave ship which left Port-au-Prince in 1839, was part of that movement. This story ended with an African victory. They had been imprisoned in the United States, and faced a legal battle that reached the Supreme Court. The consequence of their victory was not only their freedom, but also the recognition of the right of those who were brought to the Americas, through the illegal slave trade, to return to their land of origin. The survivor group, whose members had been enslaved from the Mende people of Sierra Leone, managed to return, along with missionaries who had volunteered to accompany them and help them to reintegrate into their homeland.

Around the same time, slavery was abolished in British (1832) and French (1848) colonies in the Caribbean. There were also rumours of an expansion of the abolitionist movement in 1846, spreading from Venezuela to Brazil. Slave trade in the former Spanish colonies ended in the early 1860s. All these stories were reaching Brazilian cities and ports, with greater frequency and intensity. The newspapers of that time reported comments and stories from people who arrived by boat, and in streets people discussed the transatlantic Black experience.

THE SOUND OF THE DRUMS

These stories also arrived in the cities of Africa closely connected with the Americas. Those who crossed the ocean were the messengers and often eyewitnesses of events. The tremor that shook the Atlantic mountains[12] was also felt on the other side.

The transatlantic connections were experienced more intensely in the coastal cities of Brazil, especially the main ports of Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. In reports on the communities of returnees, there are clear and constant references to the Bahian capital as a place of departure from Brazil. The memories of the city of Bahia – which was how they referred to the capital of the province – as the place of origin, are recorded by the descendants of the returnees in the Gulf of Benin today.

Rio de Janeiro city, even though the capital of the Brazilian Empire, was not mentioned in studies or in the discourse of returnees as an important place of origin. But a better way of reading the documentation is to understand the city as the backdrop for a significant return of the freed Africans, to the West African coast in 1836, and also in the 1850s.

PLACES OF DESTINATION

The study was limited to the areas, as found in the documentation, where the freed Africans first arrived. This region on the coast of West Africa, comprising an area from the coast of Ghana, on the old Slave Coast, to the city of Lagos – including the Gulf of Benin was referred to as 'the coast of Africa.' Ports like Badagri, Lagos and, more often, the Coast of Africa were named in the research documentation.

However, in Rio de Janeiro sources, the city of Luanda (Angola) appeared more frequently, than the Coast of Africa, even in individual movements or in small groups of returnees. The archives also revealed the port of Cabinda, (on the coast of West-Central Africa, part of North Angola today), as a destination chosen by returnees. Thus the most important destinations were the cities of the Gulf of Benin, Cabinda and Luanda. These areas on the coastline of Africa were also undergoing profound changes. These included the abolition of the slave trade and the transition of the local economies to the so-called legal trade. At the same time, among other events and processes, there were the wars among the Yoruba people, conflicts in the area of Daomé and the rise of new royal groups within the nobility of Cabinda. Completing the framework of internal adjustment was the arrival of increasingly large numbers of foreigners, particularly Europeans, seeking their share in business and political power.

The English led the fight against the slave trade as a way of entering and overthrowing African leaders and powerful families. In 1851, Lagos was conquered and, in the following years, missionaries and soldiers arrived throughout the west coast, mostly British and French, but also German and Portuguese, among others. Colonial treaties with local chiefs facilitated the gradual penetration and the taking of strips of land and ensuring exclusivity in trade. This combination of transition and internal processes in the Atlantic context characterized the regions that became destinations for returnees from the Americas.

The development of the research led to a broader perspective, speaking both from the geographical and epistemological point of view – not so much discovering more accurate quantitative data as sensing those elements

which constitute the experience of return, which occurred at similar times and places, often as a shared experience.

THE VOICE OF THE RETURNEES

When reading the speeches made by freed Blacks heading for Sierra Leone, we realize that they are similar to the goals expressed by Brazilians. The trips at the beginning of the back-to-Africa movement in the Americas, were sponsored by religious institutions. They took to Africa their ideals of ending the slave trade. They wanted to reshape Africa with these ideas of civilization from the western Atlantic world of that time.

Brazilian returnees competed with those from other parts of the Americas for positions. This was more evident in the case of migrants to Sierra Leone who then came to the cities of the Gulf of Benin. They built their identity around their claim of belonging to a particular group (mainly Yoruba people). Their Atlantic experiences also made up part of their identity. Some common experiences helped build relationships that led to the absorption of the liberated of Sierra Leone into the community of Brazilians in the Gulf of Benin.

In some discourses about the return, as it could be seen in the letter of Joaquim Nicolau, the motives for returning to Africa could be the same as those of migrants to Sierra Leone. And the factors observed in the formation of communities of Brazilians, based on a discourse of differentiation of civilization, also create points of intersection between these groups. Both groups were freed from slavery in the Americas. Both returned to their continent of origin – where they had lived freely before enslavement, and from where they had been removed by force. Even those who were born in the Americas carried these burdens which had marked the generation that came before them, their immediate ancestors.

The common history of capture and of crossing the Atlantic also linked them with another generation of freed slaves who, in the years between 1830 and 1870, made their journey to Africa, from Brazil or other parts of the Black Americas. This reinforces the idea that the returns were part of a general movement. Once in Africa, local realities, linked to the Atlantic world, contributed to the way the different groups were formed as a community whose relationships were born overseas.

LEAVING RIO DE JANEIRO[13]

It can be seen in the records that during the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s (until 1855), 692 boats left the port of Rio de Janeiro for various ports in Africa,

where the main destinations were on the coast of Central Africa-West: 29 per cent for Angola, 8.9 per cent for Angola by Benguela, 10.2 per cent directly to Benguela. Thus we see that about 48 per cent of departures from Rio were for the African-Atlantic Coast, as we see in Table 1.

Table 1: Ports of destination of boats leaving the Rio de Janeiro, 1830-1855

Location	Dispatches
Angola	202
Angola through Benguela	62
Benguela	71
Cape of Good Hope	91
Cape Verde	104
Coast-of-Africa (Costa-da-Mina)	11
Goa through Ports of Africa	59
Others	92
TOTAL	692

Sources: Exits from vessels in relation to Brazilian and Foreign Passengers, Arquivo Nacional (National Archives); and also in *Jornal do Commercio*: Movimento do Porto: Biblioteca Nacional (National Library). Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

There is an impressive number of boats going to Cape Verde, which characterizes the continued importance of the islands as a warehouse for the slave trade, even in times of lawlessness in the surrounding seas. Indeed, the place was a holding point of departure for the slave trade since the sixteenth century, and in the seventeenth century it acquired a significant position in the trade.

Ribeira Grande, a city on the archipelago, was the first to be founded by the Portuguese in Africa and functioned as slave warehouse. It also became a centre for the production of cloth (the 'pieces of the earth') which they learned from the weavers of the former Portuguese Guinea and Senegâmbia on the continent. It was under European domination (Portugal) for a long time.

The maritime route between Brazil and Europe also passed through Cape Verde. Its strategic place on the maritime route made the archipelago a melting pot of influences. Individuals and groups passing through ports

on these routes, created networks of contacts and exchanges, bringing news. That largely explains the events of mid-nineteenth century in Cape Verde, highlighted below:

> At Ribeira de Engenhos, in 1822, the idea of the independence of Cape Verde islands had been strong among the peasants who thought that they should unite themselves to Brazil, and, in 1835 and 1836, a slave rebellion originated in Monte Agarro, a town situated about 4 km from the city of Praia, they wanted to kill the whites, loot the homes and dominate the city (Santiago); and the slave rebellion on the island of Sal Jornaleiros flew the flag they had taken from the Brazilian consulate; in 1841 an uprising of 300 tenants of Achada Hawk, with knives and sticks, called on the public to join them and demonstrated against the payment of rent to owners, considering that the land should belong to them. (Santiago)[14]

Mid-century, the archipelago assumed new economic functions due to the transition to 'legitimate' trade, as they used to say at the time.

The boats setting sail for the Cape of Good Hope, too many as can be seen from Table 1, almost without exception, carried coffee, the new major export product of Brazil. By contrast, the boats that sailed for the ports of West-Central Africa carried almost exclusively spirits and food; the boats heading for the extreme south of the continent carried sacks of the rubiácea plant cultivated in Brazil; new routes, new products. The routes of East Africa met the demands of sea traffic and included the route to India, through which the goods were carried as a commodity of great importance. The Atlantic Ocean was increasingly being monitored by the English, especially in the region near the Equator. Thus the sea routes further south meant fewer encounters with the British Navy.

A relatively small number of ships sailed for the ports of Costa da Mina compared to those carrying freed slaves from Rio de Janeiro to Africa. Most were identified as mina rather than as freed Africans. There were 304 African mina compared to a total of 471 freed that were recorded between the years 1830-1855. That is, 64.5 per cent of those returning to Africa from the port of Rio de Janeiro were identified as Black 'mine'. This total reflects its proportion in the African population of the city. Mary Karash, (whose study, till today, is the general basis of reference on the origins of enslaved Africans brought to Rio de Janeiro), reports that between 1830 and 1852, only 1.5 per cent of those captives were from slave ships coming from West

Africa, compared with 79.7 per cent coming from the West-Central Africa region. It is noteworthy that the records of departures of the freed slaves from the port of Rio de Janeiro (from the documentation of the National Archives and the National Library) seldom note the nationality of the Africans travelling to their homeland. However, we can say that the trend was to return to the region of origin.

Table 2: Destination of the flow of returnees to Africa from the port of Rio de Janeiro 1828-1854

African region	Freed slaves
Angola	101
Benguela	41
Costa da Mina	304
Cape of Good Hope	1
Cape Verde	10
East Africa	4
Other	4
TOTAL	465

Sources: Exits from vessels in relation to Brazilian and Foreign Passengers, Arquivo Nacional (National Archives); and also *Jornal do Commercio*: Movimento do Porto: Biblioteca Nacional (National Library). Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

THE BRAZILIAN COMMUNITY

The French colonial records of the Gulf of Benin, in the Centre des Archives d'Outre-Mer (CAOM), identified people by race in their reports until the 1890s. Brazilians were categorized as 'créoles'. It shows huge annual changes – though stressing it was approximate. There was a 100 per cent increase between 1890 and 1891. The group rose from 1,000 to 2,000 members. We should take into account the possibility of new arrivals from Brazil after the abolition of slavery in Brazil in 1888. These were probably the old Africans who were seen by the Brazilian physician and anthropologist, Nina Rodrigues, in 1897 in the port of Salvador, with their luggage.[15] At first, returnees had various origins, and easily integrated with the community. Those freed from the Caribbean, a number not yet researched, but certainly not negligible, were absorbed into the Brazilian community. Secondly, the returnees integrated through cultural compatibility with local customs, the establishment of extended families, with kinship through multiple marriages. Through free

association and relationships they had big families, with children who were integrated into the clan. Often people became part of the community through 'godfather ties.'

Within the period selected for the survey (1830-1870), most returns took place during the second half of the 1830s, with a decrease in the 1840s, and then a remarkable growth in the first half of the 1850s. This ebb and flow reflected local circumstances combined with Atlantic circumstances. There were different reasons for returning, depending on circumstances. One cannot see the returns to Africa during the 1830s in the same light as those during the 1850s, because of different factors and changes taking place along the coast on both sides of the Atlantic.

A CONNECTED WORLD, WHY NOT A CONNECTED HISTORY?

There were permanent contacts and constant interactions across the Atlantic. These contacts were not only between traders or people in power. There were long-standing connections between street corners of Brazilian cities, Luanda, the port of the Cabinda Bay, the Gulf of Benin, Sierra Leone and the docks of Havana. Means and strategies of communication were part of the dynamic international relations.

What enabled these returnees to undertake such an extraordinary changes in their lives, migrating to Africa from North America or the Caribbean? The sources reveal inspiration and mobilization, connected with their time and the new integration of African spaces in the Western world. This element should be taken into account when the returns are analyzed, with all its reasons and within its whole context.

ENDNOTES

1. Paper presented at the conference *Back to Africa: Afro-Brazilian Returnees and Their Communities*. Johannesburg, 14-16 July 2008, organized by The Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS).
2. Mônica Lima is a Brazilian PhD in History, and also teaches History of Africa and the History of Africans in Brazilian institutions. She works at CAp/UFRJ (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro).
3. Slave Trade Office 7 – A3 – 1. Londres: Foreign Office.
4. Blyden, E.W. *The Call of Providence to the Descendants of Africa in America. A Discourse Delivered to Coloured Congregation in the Cities of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimores, Harrisburg, during the Summer of 1862*. New York: Liberia's Offering, 1862.
5. Reclus, Elisée. *Geographie Universelle. La Terre et les Hommes. vol. XII. Afrique Occidentale: Archipels Atlantiques, Sénegambie et Soudan Occidental*. Paris, 1887.

6. The metaphor of the 'third shore of the river,' is an image taken from the famous story by Guimarães Rosa, a Brazilian writer. It emphasizes the possibility of creating a third way of perceiving reality, breaking with the dualities that define it and restrict it. See ROSA, João Guimarães. 'A terceira margem do rio.' *Primeiras Histórias*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1988.
7. Quilombo is a word originated from the Kimbundo language spoken in Luanda (Angola). In XIX century Brazil quilombo meant the cimarron settlements. A quilombo was a place where the slaves of Brazil took refuge, and together built a self-sustaining community. The people of the quilombos were known as 'qilombolas' in Brazil and sometimes they had to defend themselves against slave owners and government troops.
8. In Brazil the word 'criolos' (creole) was used to refer to slaves of African descent.
9. That means parts of Rio de Janeiro – capital of the Brazilian Empire, Salvador in Bahia province (state), and Recife in Pernambuco province (state).
10. Reis, João José.'A greve negra de 1857 na Bahia.' *São Paulo: Revista da USP* nº18. Junho-Julho-Agosto de 1993. See also the book by the same author: *Slave Rebelion in Brazil. The Muslim uprising of 1835 in Bahia.* John Hopkins University Press, 1995. Translation: Arthur Brakel.
11. Quilombo is a word originated from the Kimbundo language spoken in Luanda (Angola). In nineteenth-century Brazil quilombo meant the cimarrons settlements. A quilombo was a place where the slaves of Brazil took refuge, and together built a self-sustaining community. The people of the quilombos are known as *quilombolas*
12. Here we can remember Linnebaug's essay. Linebaugh, Peter: 'All the Atlantic Mountains Shook,' *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 10 (Autumn 1982), 87-121. See also Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, 'The Many-Headed Hydra,' *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 3 (1990), 225-52.
13. We have to note that there are more return records from the port of Salvador – in Bahia province, Northeast of Brazil. Research revealed 3633 passport registrations for African ports, in the years 1830-1870, including 2587 freed Africans and African descendants. These sources are well organized at the Arquivo Público da Bahia – APEB (Public Archives of Bahia), and were an important part of the research.
14. Andrade, Elisa 'A luta de libertação de Cabo Verde não foi circumstancial nem veio por arrastamento' 2005. Article published in http://www.liberationafrique.org/spip.php?article872
15. A moving report was written by Nina Rodrigues in his book. Nina Rodrigues. *Os Africanos no Brasil.* Brasília: UnB, 2004. 119. Even though Nina Rodrigues had a racist point of view, we should agree that some parts of his book are amazing and very enriching.

4

ATLANTIC MICROHISTORIES: Slaving, Mobility and Personal Ties in the Atlantic World (Angola and Brazil)

ROQUINALDO FERREIRA

INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates the micro-dynamics of the social, cultural and commercial networks that underpinned slaving in Angola in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. To that end, it uses biographical information on merchants operating out of Luanda and Benguela to explain their commercial strategies, their cultural integration into local communities and their close commercial links with Brazil.[1] It highlights individual mobility as a central dimension to the commercial networks underpinning slaving in the southern Atlantic. Situated at the crossroads of three historiographies (African History, Atlantic History and Brazilian History), the paper employs a conceptual framework that relies on a close study of frequent personal movements – back and forth across the Atlantic – to study the dynamics of the trade between Angola and Brazil.[2] By focusing on the interconnections of commerce between two regions of the southern Atlantic (Angola and Brazil), it shifts away from the dominating northern-Atlantic focus regarding studies of Atlantic History.[3]

I begin by sketching out the specific bilateral framework that characterized the slave trade from Angola to Brazil. Like the slave trade in West Africa, the Angolan trade simultaneously gave birth to and was dependent on a highly amalgamated cultural and social milieu. In contrast to West Africa, however, where commercial links with Europe played a pivotal role in coastal slaving, the Angolan trade with Brazil was direct, and largely independent of Portugal. Brazilian hegemony was particularly strong in Benguela, which witnessed the shipment of over 500,000 Africans to the Americas, primarily to Rio de Janeiro, from the late seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. In order to understand the

beginning of the Benguela slave trade in the early eighteenth century, I reconstruct the personal trajectory of José dos Santos Torres, a merchant who re-focused investments away from West Africa towards Angola due to the erosion of Portuguese influence on the Mina Coast. To demonstrate how commercial networks were also dependent on and fueled by personal, educational and religious links between Angola and Brazil, I piece together biographical information on merchants. I then take a close look at the Benguela merchant community, and Benguela links with Rio de Janeiro in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries. By devoting significant attention to Benguela, I seek to redress a well-established and imbalanced focus on Luanda within the scholarship of the slave trade between Angola and Brazil.[4]

BACKGROUND

The southern Atlantic link between Angola and Brazil is important for several reasons. The Brazilians, Angolans and Portuguese merchants examined in this chapter carried approximately forty-five percent of the Africans taken across the Atlantic from Angola and the Congo. Brazil was the largest single American destination for slaves, receiving approximately forty-five percent of the overall number of Africans affected by the slave trade, most of them from Central Africa.[5] The Angolan trade first developed in northern Angola between Loango and the Congo in the early sixteenth century. Local merchants operating out of São Tomé and the Congo circumvented royal and private Portuguese groups' stakes in the business.[6] By the end of the sixteenth century, a southward process of decentralization of the slave trade was set in motion, eventually leading to the foundation of Luanda. As indicated by Joseph Miller, an attempt to strengthen metropolitan stakes in slaving served as the primary backdrop to the foundation of Luanda.[7]

Since the mid-seventeenth century – if not earlier – Angolan ties with Brazil were as strong as West African links with northeastern Brazil. The fact that two-thirds of Africans shipped from Angola were taken to Brazil, illustrates the importance of the link between these regions. The trade between Angola and Brazil took place within a bilateral framework that undercut Portuguese influence while bolstering Angola's direct ties with Brazil. In addition to the vast trade in locally produced goods like rum, Brazilian economic dominance in Angola was also a function of a shift in the centre of gravity from Lisbon to Salvador Bahia of the trade in Indian textiles, which were the main commodity used to purchase slaves in Angola. This development, which occurred in the seventeenth century,

enhanced Bahia's stature in the southern Atlantic economy by turning Salvador into a focal point of the Indian textile commerce. Brazil-based merchants regularly tapped into Salvador's position in the Indian textile trade to undercut Portuguese commercial interests in Angola and carve out a hegemonic niche in Luanda and Benguela.[8]

While seventeenth-century Angola was primarily linked to Bahia and Pernambuco in the Brazilian northeast, the gold production in Minas Gerais turned Rio de Janeiro into the chief Angolan commercial partner. Links with Brazil were crucial to several aspects of Angolan slaving and the overall management of the 'Portuguese colony'. These links included the deployment of soldiers from Brazil to fight wars in the Luanda hinterland; the continual flow into Angola of Brazil-based merchants, bureaucrats and political and criminal exiles; and the ownership of ships used in the Angolan trade, among others.[9] In 1811, for example, seven of the ten ships operating on the Luanda-Rio de Janeiro route of the Angolan trade were owned by merchants based in Rio.[10] In 1827, a consul from newly independent Brazil in Luanda estimated that the number of Brazilian-owned ships in the Luanda harbour stood at fourteen.[11]

In Benguela, Brazilian hegemony was even more pronounced than in Luanda. There, after the failure of an early attempt to develop slaving in the first half of the seventeenth century, the export of slaves increased towards the end of the century and became a fully fledged independent operation in the first decades of the eighteenth century.[12] Benguela then became a focal point of shipments of slaves to Brazil, developing lasting links with Rio de Janeiro. The discovery of gold in Minas Gerais in the early eighteenth century drove up the demand for labour in Brazil and added significant momentum to slaving in southern Angola. In the early 1810s, for example, all ships used to transport slaves from that city to Brazil were owned by Brazil-based merchants.[13] Between 1796 and 1828, at least 80 percent of the slave ships that set sail from Benguela were bound for Rio de Janeiro.[14] Not surprisingly, Benguela accounted for approximately half of the slave ships entering the port of Rio de Janeiro between 1795 and 1811.[15]

CULTURAL MILIEU

Robin Law and Kristen Mann recently coined the term 'Atlantic Community' to refer to the strong commercial and cultural ties between Bahia and the Bight of Benin.[16] Law and Mann's focus on Africa and African agency in the development of the Diaspora differs from Paul Gilroy's North American-oriented analysis of White domination of the 'black Atlantic.'[17] According to

Law and Mann, the slave trade between Bahia and West Africa was marked by cross-racial and cross-cultural dimensions due to the prominence of mixed-race or culturally hybrid merchants in the slave trade between those two regions. Indeed, culturally hybrid dynamics emerged elsewhere in Atlantic Africa as well. In Senegambia, for example, merchants known as *lançados*, whose identity blended elements of European and African culture, controlled critical aspects of the coastal trade.[18] On the Gold coast, the establishment of a large number of coastal fortresses by European nations directly contributed to the rise of culturally hybrid creole communities.[19] In the Bight of Benin, a place where creolization was not a driving force in the early slave trade, the nineteenth century return of former slaves from Brazil bolstered coastal slaving and intensified links with Bahia, which led to the rise of highly creolized coastal communities.[20] Even in regions outside Portuguese and Brazilian influence, such as the Bight of Biafra, cultural hybridism provided a framework for coastal trade.[21] As demonstrated in recent work by Randy Sparks, it allowed two Efke individuals who were illegally enslaved to fight for their freedom in the Caribbean, Virginia, and England.[22]

Law and Mann argue that the concept of Atlantic community cannot be applied to the Angolan case on the grounds that the Portuguese held sway in the region as a colonial power.[23] In reality, even in the first half of the seventeenth century, when forces fighting on behalf of the Portuguese were able to deal several military blows to African kingdoms and establish an area of influence that stretched from coastal Luanda to Mpungo Ndongo, through the creation of military and administrative outposts (*presidios*), their achievements grew largely out of alliances with local Imbangala groups.[24] In the second half of the seventeenth century, Portuguese capacity to influence events in the interior of Angola dwindled dramatically. This was due to the consolidation of Imbangala power through the creation of the Kingdom of Kasanje, which established a political and military power base that undermined Luanda's capacity to conduct military operations in the Luanda hinterland.[25]

Thus, in lieu of a strict colonial regime, the social and cultural landscape in Luanda, Benguela and their respective hinterlands were marked by a highly amalgamated cultural and social dynamic. Africans would seize upon elements of European culture to create and reinforce social hierarchies among themselves, while key elements of the bureaucratic and legal apparatus of the colonial administration derived from African social and cultural institutions.[26] The dynamics of the internal slave trade lay at the heart of the transformation of the social and cultural landscapes in

internal Angola. This transformation seriously affected the African social fabric.[27]

The social and cultural landscapes in Angola were also influenced by interaction with Brazil. For example, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some of the soldiers deployed in Angola were recruited in Brazil – a policy so entrenched that the Portuguese crown openly supported it at the end of the eighteenth century.[28] Furthermore, in addition to Africans and Euro-Africans, a significant number of individuals occupying positions in the administration in Luanda, Benguela and the interior of Angola had been sent to Africa as political, religious and criminal exiles.[29]

Details of these individuals' lives appear in Angolan archives. For example, the records state that Fernando Martins do Amaral Gurgel, a colonial administrator stationed in territories of the Kingdom of Kasanje, to oversee business and diplomatic relations with the Kingdom, was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1749.[30] Daniel Corrêa da Silva, an officer serving in the colonial outpost in Mbaka in 1799, was recruited in Rio de Janeiro in 1785.[31] Alexandre dos Reis Pereira Barboza, a Bahian-born soldier who enlisted as a volunteer in Salvador in 1761, served thirty-seven years in the military in Brazil, West Africa and Angola. After serving in Bahia, Barboza was assigned to West Africa in Whydah. Barboza was then appointed *capitão mor* of the Angolan military outpost (*presídio*) of Encoje, and subsequently to Kakonda, located inland from Benguela.[32]

THE EARLY TRADE BETWEEN BENGUELA AND BRAZIL

The geopolitical circumstances that led up to the development of slaving in Benguela grew out of the erosion of Portuguese influence in West Africa, due to increased activity by Dutch, French and British slave ships in the areas where the Portuguese traditionally had the upper hand.[33] Law asserts that 'in November 1709 there were reported to be 13 ships of several nations trading at Whydah simultaneously; in the twelve months from April 1713 to March 1714, no fewer than thirty-five ships of all nations came here, with again sometimes between twelve and fourteen at the same time; in January 1716 it was reported that eight ships (two French, five Portuguese and one Dutch) had taken 2,800 slaves from Whydah in two months; and in September 1718 that there were ten ships (five Portuguese, three French, and two English) at Whydah.'[34] According to Harms, 'in the early 1728, for example, there were six French ships, five Portuguese ships, and three English ships waiting in the harbour beyond the forts (in Whydah), and the competition among them had driven up slave prices by a third.'[35]

Due to the competition for slaving niches and the spillover of European wars to Africa, the slave trade could result in attacks pitting ships from different European nations against each other. Although authorities voiced concern about British and French attacks in 1706, the Dutch were, by any measure, the most resilient enemies of Brazilian ships along the West African coast in the early eighteenth century. They took advantage of exclusive commercial rights established by mid-seventeenth century treaties with Portugal that essentially prohibited Portuguese merchants from trading along the West African coast.[36] By the end of the seventeenth century, for example, they would not allow Brazilian ships to conduct slaving unless they paid a ten percent fee on their cargos and refrained from carrying European goods. Between 1715 and 1756, 500 ships paid the ten percent fee.[37] Dutch aggression might have been related to the rise of private merchants in the Dutch slave trade.[38]

Although ships sought to comply with the rules established by the Dutch, many were still attacked.[39] Dutch attacks primarily affected imports of slaves to Bahia, which drew heavily on West Africa. By 1718, the viceroy of Brazil openly called for a one-year ban on the slave trade with West Africa due to losses suffered by the attacks.[40] In 1722, a Bahia-based slave merchant even requested a royal license to trade in Mozambique on the grounds that Brazilian ships could no longer sail along the West African coast.[41] However, Brazilian ships would still routinely purchase British passports to gain free passage in case they came across Dutch ships.[42] Despite the fact that the odds on successfully resisting Dutch attacks were virtually insurmountable, Lisbon managed to send warships to protect ships bound for Brazil.[43] However, the ineffectiveness of military action was oddly illustrated when Portuguese warships were unable to prevent the Dutch from seizing a Brazilian ship.[44] By 1731, the Dutch controlled 15 of the forts on the Gold Coast, the British nine, the Danes one, while the Portuguese did not have a single fort that could offer protection to Brazilian ships.[45] Between 1715 and 1756, 12,500 slaves were seized by the Dutch from Brazilian ships.[46]

The impact of these obstacles on the development of the Benguela trade are illustrated by the career of José dos Santos Torres. In the early eighteenth century, Torres was perhaps the most prominent Bahia-based merchant operating out of West Africa. In 1721, for example, he obtained royal approval to ship 150 boxes of Brazilian sugar to the Mina Coast in 1721.[47] In addition to borrowing capital from British merchants in West Africa, Torres planned to use the sugar purchased in Brazil to trade with the Dutch back in Africa.[48] Later, Torres seized upon fears generated by

Dutch attacks on Bahian ships embarking slaves in West Africa to obtain licenses to build forts on the Mina Coast.[49] The first of the forts was built in 1721 and was manned by troops provided by Brazilian authorities in Bahia and guarded by two frigates maintained by Torres.[50] Portuguese warships captured three Dutch slave ships between 1725 and 1727.[51]

Since 1726, Dutch attacks had prompted Torres to begin dispatching ships to Benguela, but as the Portuguese were further challenged in West Africa, he completely refocused his activities towards Angola. Between 1726 and 1728, he sent four ships to Benguela, crossing the Atlantic directly without calling in Luanda to pay duties.[52] In the early 1730s, the destruction by the Dutch of his fort in Jakin, West Africa, prompted Torres to move out of West Africa and relocate to Pernambuco.[53] Although Torres was still dispatching ships to West Africa in 1731 four years later, most of his business was conducted in Angola.[54] Between 1735 and 1739, his ships sailed from Rio to Benguela at least four times.[55] During the following decades and until his death in Luanda in 1774, Torres traded prominently in both Luanda and Benguela.[56] A former holder of the contract to collect duties on slaves shipped from Luanda, Vasco Lourenço, who had business in recently discovered gold mines in Mato Grosso, also began dispatching ships to Benguela.This suggests that Brazilian mining had an influence on the *de facto* beginning of the direct trade between Benguela and Brazil in the late 1720s.[57]

The establishment of direct trade with Brazil posed a serious threat to Luandan *moradores*' stakes in Benguela slaving, since *moradores* had traditionally benefited from the obligatory stopovers in Luanda, to pay duties for slaves embarked in Benguela. Payoffs were made in the form of slaves. As a result of complaints by *moradores*, the legislation was reinstated in late 1720s.[58] By the early 1740s, however, even the holder of the contract to collect duties on slaves exported from Luanda was taking part in the direct trade between Benguela and Brazil.[59] Of a total of 67 licenses issued between 1732 and 1757, Lisbon only turned down requests for ships to sail directly from Benguela to Brazil twice.[60]

INDIVIDUAL MOBILITY

Soldiers and bureaucrats notwithstanding, most of the free individuals who crossed the Atlantic from Angola to Brazil, and vice versa, were merchants. Mobility was a function of the complex commercial ties that linked merchants on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to activities related to slaving, merchants would simultaneously own ships and properties in Angola and Brazil. Tereza Francisca, a resident of Bahia and Ana Joaquina

dos Santos Silva, a prominent Luanda merchant, are cases in point. In the 1820s, Silva purchased a number of houses in Luanda that belonged to Tereza Francisca.[61] The case of Brigadier António João de Menezes, who had been a prominent slave dealer in Luanda, provides further evidence of the links that merchants held across the Atlantic. While holding several positions in the Angolan bureaucracy, Menezes was active in slaving until retiring to Rio de Janeiro with his wife in the late 1820s. From Rio, Menezes remained the owner of several properties in Luanda, and he bought and sold several properties there in the early 1830s.[62]

Conversely, several individuals based in Luanda owned properties in Brazil, as demonstrated by Mariana de Assunção Pinheiro, who owned a house in Rio in 1808.[63]

Requests for licenses to travel to Brazil also offers explanations why merchants crossed the Atlantic from Angola to Brazil, and vice-versa. In 1799, for example, António José da Silva, a representative of a Brazilian commercial house who had been sent to Luanda forty years earlier in 1759, decided to retire in Rio de Janeiro.[64] Other merchants would travel to Brazil to discuss financial matters with their Brazilian partners or bosses. In 1811, for example, António Francisco dos Santos, a merchant in Luanda, stated he would travel to Rio de Janeiro to settle financial accounts with his Brazilian correspondents.[65] In 1826, the *Tenente de Milícias,* Francisco Paul de Graça received a two-year license to go to Brazil to 'liquidate business with his Brazilian partners.'[66] Since Luandan based, mid-level merchants lacked the connections and capital to simply ship slaves from Luanda who would then be sold by correspondents in Brazil, they had to travel to Brazil to oversee the sale of the slaves they owned. In 1825, for example, two Luandan merchants, Francisco José Vieira and Joaquim Martins Mourão, said they needed to go to Brazil 'not only because this was his custom but also because he needed to sell his slaves.'[67]

In the 1820s, when the British first targeted shipments of slaves from Luanda and Benguela, merchants' mobility was affected by the rise of abolitionism in the southern Atlantic. This is suggested by increased travel in anticipation of prohibition regarding the slave trade to Brazil in 1830.

This development brought to the southern Atlantic pressures against slaving that, by casting doubt on the future of shipments from Luanda, prompted slavers to relocate to Brazil. Slave dealers held most of of the financial assets in Angola, so that the Luanda administration sought to limit their departure in an effort to protect plans for the Angolan economy to move away from the slave trade. [68]

In order to circumvent constrictions on travel, merchants began using Luanda's notorious lack of proper medical facilities by asking for licenses to travel to Brazil to seek medical treatment. Records from Angolan archives provide ample evidence of this practice, which seemed to be a pretext for permanent departure from Angola. In 1827, for example, at least two Luandan merchants, Francisco Luis Gonçalves Ferreira and José Joaquim Ferreira Torres, were allowed to leave for Brazil for alleged health reasons.[69] In the following year, António Francisco Ribeiro and José Polilo 'requested license to travel to Rio de Janeiro to undertake medical treatment.'[70] Also in 1828, Francisco José Gomes 'requested a one-year license to go to Rio de Janeiro to undertake medical treatment.'[71] In the same year, 'José Pedro de Andrade, a soldier in Dombe Grande, requested a license to travel to Rio de Janeiro to undertake medical treatment.'[72] Several merchants would travel to Brazil accompanied by members of their families, which further suggests that they were seeking to relocate on a permanent basis and not merely planning to stay in Brazil for the duration of their 'medical treatment.' For example, Dona Maria Ferreira da Silva, the widow of Diniz Vieira de Lima, 'requested a license to leave for Rio de Janeiro with her son, Thomas, and two *agregadas*, Francisca and Rosa.'[73] In 1828, Estevão da Cruz requested a license to go to Rio de Janeiro for medical reasons, taking with him two sons and one girl.'[74]

PERSONAL, EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS TIES

In addition to being commercially-driven, the trans-Atlantic networks were also based on family and personal connections. Many of the merchants operating out of Luanda and Benguela had either been born, or spent significant periods of time, in Brazil. Their families often remained in Brazil while the merchants lived and conducted business in Angola. For example, the granddaughter of José de Souza, the holder of the Benguela salt contract and the local representative of the Companhia do Grão Pará e Maranhão in the 1770s, was living in Rio when he died in 1780.[75] The will of Francisco Xavier dos Reis shows that he had fathered a child with his slave, Mariana, in Bahia before settling in Benguela.[76] In 1799, the wife and child of Joaquim António da Roza, who was a doctor in Benguela and a small-time slave dealer, were living in Rio de Janeiro.[77] In 1800, José Francisco indicated in his will that he was married in Rio and had two daughters there.[78]

The case of António José de Barros, the largest merchant in Benguela in the late 1790s, perhaps best illustrates how family ties could link Benguela

merchants to Rio de Janeiro. In 1796, Barros acknowledged in his will that he had:

> spent time in Rio de Janeiro [where] [I] had sinful sexual intercourse with a mixed-race woman, Ana, who is a slave of the deceased Domingos Rebelo Pereira. After some time, [Ana] claimed she was *pejada* [pregnant], which I doubted (since she had already had several previous sexual relations) but because she insisted that I free her for the sake of the child she had in her womb and because of the promise that I made her to grant her freedom if I was the father of her child, I had to seek religious counseling with a confessor. After explaining the situation of Ana having already had sexual intercourse with other men, [the confessor] understood my uncertainty and I was exonerated of my promise to Ana. After several years, I came to know in this city [Benguela] that a boy named Feliciano was claiming to be my son [in Rio], and I decided to free him from slavery on principle and not because I was sure he was my son. The boy has been to this city [Benguela] recently and has returned to Rio.[79]

Merchants valued personal links because they provided a framework to conduct business and were seized upon when merchants faced hurdles and needed credit. In 1818, for example, the Luanda-based son of the Rio de Janeiro-based Joaquim Vieira de Souza relied on his father to avoid being drafted into the Luanda army. To help his son, Souza said he was a minor who had been sent to Angola to conduct business on behalf of his father.[80] In addition, merchants who lived on different sides of the Atlantic would seal their business partnership by marrying each others' relatives. Thus, business ties between Rio de Janeiro-based Joaquim Teixeira Macedo and his partner, Brigadier António João de Menezes, certainly became stronger when Macedo travelled to Luanda to marry the daughter of his partner. The owner of the ship Mariana Daphne, Macedo declared that 'he was the owner of several properties [in Luanda] and that he was going on the ship to Angola to marry the daughter of Brigadier António João de Menezes.'[81] Family links were also pivotal to trade in the interior of Angola, as demonstrated by the case of José António Carvalho, who travelled from Rio to Benguela and settled in Galangue in 1789. There, Carvalho strengthened connections to local African partners by fathering at least two children by African women who were subject to two African headmen named Nguingolo and Kaulokoxo.[82]

In addition to travelling across the Atlantic, merchants would send their children to Brazil, which served to further reinforce the family dimensions of their connections. In 1828, for example, João Pedro de Andrade 'requested a license to take two grandchildren, Alexandre and Martinho, whose father, Manoel Francisco de Paula, was dead, to Rio de Janeiro.'[83] Andrade delayed his trip and later re-applied for a travelling license. He then 'requested a license to take to Rio his grandchild Thome, a minor of thirteen years, a twelve-year-old mixed-race (*crioula*) girl named Francisca and a boy younger than eight years named António, the son of one of his slaves.'[84] In the following year, Manoel José da Costa, 'recently arrived from the *sertões* [backlands of the Angolan interior], requested a license to travel on the *Patacho Leopardo* to Rio de Janeiro, taking with him his young children, José and Rosa.'[85]

Many merchants' children were sent across the Atlantic – primarily to Rio de Janeiro – to be educated in Brazilian schools. In 1826, for example, José Pedro Cotta 'requested permission to send to Rio de Janeiro on the *Bergatim Flor do Mar* [his] slave named Felícia and [his] child Mariana for education.'[86] Sebastião Rodrigues da Silva 'requested a license to send his daughter Augusta Rodrigues da Silva to Rio de Janeiro for education, together with a slave named Maria, who had already been to that city [Rio].'[87] In 1828, José Joaquim Ferreira 'requested a license to send his daughter and son to Rio de Janeiro for education.'[88] In 1829, Justiniano José dos Reis 'requested a license to send his ten-year-old godson named Justiniano da Costa Covello to Rio de Janeiro for education.'[89] In 1829, Francisco Ferreira Gomes, 'tutor of Luiz, son of the late António Lopes Anjo, requested a license to send Luiz to Rio de Janeiro to be educated.'[90]

The trend certainly dates back to the seventeenth century, as demonstrated by complaints by an Angolan governor in 1697 that European settlers in Luanda were forced to marry African women because young White women were sent to Brazil to be educated, or to live in convents. In the eighteenth century, a governor of Benguela referred to the practice and added that many of the children sent to Brazil were the mixed-race offspring of liaisons between merchants and local African women.[91] In 1797, for example, a census of the Benguela population indicated that one of the children of the mulatto merchant, José Rodrigues de Magalhães, was studying in Rio.[92] In 1798, António José de Barros, one of the leading merchants in Benguela, sent three of the children he had fathered with slaves in Benguela to Rio de Janeiro, probably also to be educated.[93] In 1827, Justiniano José dos Reis, himself a Brazilian and one of the most powerful merchants in Benguela, 'sent to Rio de Janeiro for education a young, free,

twelve-year-old African minor named Vicente da Silva.'[94] The same year, Francisco Pereira da Rocha 'requested a license to send the mixed-race (*parda*), whose name is Rita, to Rio de Janeiro to be educated.'[95]

Finally, merchants would also retain ties with Brazil through their membership in religious brotherhoods in several Brazilian cities. To that end, they would often instruct the executors of their wills to conduct specific religious ceremonies in Rio following their deaths. António José Barros, for example, was a member of four brotherhoods located in Rio: Santíssimo Sacramento e das Almas; Nossa Senhora da Glória; Santa Luzia de Nossa Senhora do Rosário; and Jerusalém.[96] According to the governor of Benguela, the city lacked an adequate number of priests and some residents had to hold religious ceremonies in Brazil.[97] José António da Costa, for example, instructed the executor of his will that 'on the occasion of my passing, masses shall be held in all convents and churches of Rio de Janeiro during two days.'[98] José de Souza wrote in his will: '[I] state that the executor of my will shall make arrangements to perform 200 masses for my soul; 100 masses for my parents' souls; 100 masses on behalf of my siblings; and 100 for souls lying in purgatory. And because priests sometimes are lacking in this land [Benguela] the executor of my will is allowed to arrange for these masses to be held in Brazil, so that there is not a long delay.'[99] In 1798, José António de Carvalho wrote in his will that 'the executor [of my will] will make arrangements so that 20 masses on behalf of my soul are held in Rio.'[100]

THE MERCHANT COMMUNITY IN BENGUELA

While the number of *pumbeiros* (petty traders) supplying slaves to coastal Benguela was estimated at almost 900 individuals in 1798, only 33-50 merchants were estimated to be dealing slaves in Benguela city between 1778 and the 1790s.[101] During two judicial investigations conducted in 1780 and 1798, one-third of the 30 merchants interviewed had been born in Bahia, Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco, suggesting that many of the merchants in Benguela were in fact individuals born in Brazil.[102] One of them was a Black soldier in the Benguela *henriques* (African auxiliaries, rangers) battalion, who was born in Bahia and 'came to this city [Benguela] to trade in slaves.'[103] These merchants were responsible for the shipment of thousands of slaves to several Brazilian ports, primarily Rio de Janeiro, as they were either owners or co-owners of half the fleet of slave ships and dealt in slaves on behalf of Brazilian commercial houses.[104]

Most of the merchants in Benguela who had settled in the city as agents of Brazilian commercial houses were criminals and political exiles,

or had formerly served as crew members on ships sailing between Brazil and Benguela. Individuals born in Brazil operated as *sertanejos* in the central highlands throughout Kakonda, Kilengues, Galangue and Huambo and in the coastal *presídio* of Novo Redondo. In 1796, for example, the first trip from Benguela to the Luvale region was undertaken by the Bahia-born José de Assunção Mello, who was regarded as the merchant most familiar with the trade and peoples in the interior of Benguela.[105] In 1800, Henrique Pedro de Almeida, a soldier born in Brazil and stationed in Benguela by the Luanda government, was allowed to trade in the central highlands with goods provided by Joaquim Vieira de Andrade from Benguela.[106] In addition, at least three of the merchants operating out of the Novo Redondo *presídio* in the late eighteenth century were born in Brazil.[107]

Many individuals from Brazil became wealthy trading in slaves in Benguela, as demonstrated by the case of Frutuoso José Cruz, a commercial agent born in Rio de Janeiro who arrived in Benguela in 1780 at the age of 29, who held several positions in the local bureaucracy during 15 years in Benguela.[108] By the time Rodrigues returned to Rio de Janeiro in the mid-1790s, he was so well-connected that several Benguela merchants continued to rely on him to oversee the offloading and sale of slaves they shipped to Rio de Janeiro. In the 1790s, Rodrigues was the contact in Rio de Janeiro of José António de Carvalho from Benguela.[109] One year later, he was the contact that Joaquim António da Roza appointed in Rio to handle slaves shipped from Benguela and pay debts in Lisbon.[110] In the same year, two children of the largest merchant participating in the Benguela trade, António José de Barros, were living in Rodrigues' house in Rio de Janeiro.[111]

Two other examples provide further evidence of merchants born in Brazil who were successfully trading in slaves on the coast of Benguela. The first was José Rodrigues Maia, who settled in Benguela as an impoverished criminal exile in the mid-1760s.[112] Maia became the local representative of the Portuguese company created to strengthen the slave trade to Grão Pará and Maranhão and was responsible for shipping 16,586 slaves to Brazil between 1772 and 1786.[113] By mid-1786, Maia was so influential that one of the commanders of the expedition sent to Cabo Negro by the Luanda government in 1796 remarked on Maia's role in the authorities' decision to organize the expedition. According to the commander, Maia promised to support the expedition in exchange for exclusive rights to embark slaves in Cabo Negro.[114]

Maia's career in the military suggests that he was either mixed-race or Black, since before becoming the commander of the Benguela fort and an

artillery captain in 1775, he was a captain in command of Black soldiers (*guerra preta*).[115] Although he left for Rio in 1786, Maia returned to trade slaves in Benguela in the early 1790s.[116] By then, he was a close associate of two other merchants, Frutuoso José da Cruz and António José da Costa. He was so creditworthy that other Benguelan merchants would rely on him for credit to purchase goods in Rio and ship to Benguela. In 1790, for example, the Benguela-based Francisco Dias de Oliveira obtained a *letra de risco* (bill of risk) from Maia that allowed him to obtain 5,073,512 réis from Rio merchants Manoel José Mesquita, José Gonçalves Marques and António José Cunha. The money was to be used to purchase goods in Rio and was to be paid back eight months after the goods arrived in Benguela.[117]

Another successful Brazilian-born merchant in Benguela was the mulatto, Joaquim José de Andrade e Souza Menezes. In the 1780s, Souza Menezes was arrested on charges of trying to undermine the authority of the Benguelan governor by requesting a position in the Benguelan bureaucracy reporting directly to the Luanda government. He rose to become an important merchant in the late 1790s.[118] By then in his mid-thirties, Menezes was a captain in the Benguela militia and his business connections sprawled throughout Kakonda, Huambo and Novo Redondo.[119] In 1799, he was reportedly helping to finance the building of a new church in Benguela.[120] He was also the co-owner of a slave ship and had commercial partners in Rio de Janeiro and Lisbon.[121]

By and large, however, the Benguelan merchant community comprised Portuguese individuals who, like the Brazilians, had come to Benguela as agents of Brazilian commercial houses. As demonstrated by José Curto, most of them had, in fact, 'become' Brazilians by way of prolonged stays in Brazil before settling in Benguela.[122] In 1796, for example, the father of a merchant who had died on the way from Benguela to Bahia stated that his Portuguese son had 'left for the United States [Brazil], where he lived for some time, and was coming from Benguela [where he worked as a commercial agent] to the city of Bahia.'[123]

Once they settled in Benguela, merchants could still be sent to regions deep in the interior, such as Mbailundo and Galangue, to trade in slaves on behalf of financial sponsors based in Benguela. In 1789, for example, Manoel José da Cruz reported that he was a 'merchant in this *praça* [Benguela] and had lived several years in Cumbira [Huambo], where I [still] conduct most of my business and where I send my agents and from where I receive most of [the] slaves [I buy].'[124] In 1826, 'Floriano Pires Chaves', recently arrived from Rio de Janeiro, requested license to travel

in Kakonda.'[125] In 1828, 'António Joaquim, a sailor who came from Rio de Janeiro, requested license to trade in Kilengues with goods of his own.'[126] In the same year, 'the black man José da Silva, a sailor who came from Rio de Janeiro, requested a license to trade in the *sertões* [of Benguela] with *fazendas*.'[127] One year later, Domingos Rodrigues, 'recently arrived from Rio de Janeiro, requested license to trade in the *sertões* [of Benguela].'[128]

As stated by José Curto, 'that so few of the Brazilian traders residing in this central Angolan port town around 1791 were still there towards the end of 1797, points to an extremely high turnover rate within this diasporic community.' One cause was disease, which exacted a steep death toll amongst foreigners in Benguela. The other, non-lethal cause was that trade representatives dispatched from Brazil to Cattle Bay were eventually recalled home and replaced by fresh 'troops'.[129]

The high turnover and the death of José Pedro Barrocas, one of the most affluent merchants in Benguela, was the reason why the governor of Benguela stated in 1796 that 'the lack of former wealthy *moradores* who gave Benguela its reputation [in the trade] deeply hurts the city's economy.'[130] In addition to being called back to Rio by their commercial partners, some merchants returned to Brazil after amassing significant fortunes from trading slaves. For example, the *sargento mor* António José da Costa, who had been dealing in slaves in Benguela since 1774 and whose business sprawled as far inland as Mbailundo, returned to Brazil with his wife in 1796.[131] Some merchants would also move away from Benguela to improve their business activities, as demonstrated by the case of Domingos Ferreira Leite. In 1797, Leite was listed in a census by the Benguela colonial administration as a Rio de Janeiro resident who owned a property in Benguela. Two years later, he began a successful career in Luanda.[132]

The turnover of merchants was so high that Lisbon unsuccessfully attempted to prohibit the colonial administration from issuing licenses for merchants to leave Benguela in the late eighteenth century.[133] The new policy was probably an effort to retain a group of merchants who arrived in the city in 1797, since they were described by the governor of Benguela as 'a new group of merchants who are creditworthy and reliable.'[134] Three of these merchants, Lourenço Joaquim, Francisco Alvares and José da Silva Teixeira, came from Rio de Janeiro.[135] Lourenço Joaquim and Francisco Alvares were ship owners, whereas José da Silva Teixeira had reportedly amassed 25,000 *réis* during his previous career as a slave ship captain. In Benguela, Teixeira became the partner of the merchants José Pereira Guimarães and Manoel Gomes from Rio. In addition to coming to Benguela with goods worth 200,000 *cruzados* that belonged to merchants

in Rio, Teixeira was the co-owner of a ship that partners were purchasing in Lisbon.[136]

To entice Teixeira to settle in Benguela, the governor offered him a high position in the army in 1796.[137] The governor's enthusiasm was perhaps due to the fact that he wanted Teixeira to take over the commercial house previously managed by Lourenço Pereira Tavares, a prominent merchant who had passed away earlier that year. In 1797, a report by the colonial administration listed Benguela settlers, and Teixeira was described as a 'lieutenant of the [Benguela] militia, white, single, 37-year-old merchant.'[138] As conditions in Benguela deteriorated in the late eighteenth century due to French piracy off the coast and a collapse in the illicit French supply of Indian textiles to the city, a group of merchants suggested that if the colonial administration did not take steps to improve the situation, they would leave the city.[139] In 1803, José da Silva Teixeira was one of three merchants living in Rio de Janeiro who had withdrawn a *letra* written by a deceased Benguela merchant. It is possible that he had relocated to Rio a few years after dealing in slaves in Benguela.[140]

BENGUELA COMMERCIAL LINKS WITH BRAZIL

In addition to Brazil, Benguela merchants also held commercial ties with individuals based in several other cities throughout the Portuguese Atlantic. In 1793, for example, António Pinto de Almeida wrote in his will that payments for credits he owned should be made in Lisbon, Rio and Bahia.[141] In 1805, Aurélio Veríssimo Vieira, who was the owner of the ship *Nossa Senhora da Piedade,* together with the Benguela-based António Francisco dos Santos, had commercial ties with Lisbon, Bahia, Pernambuco and Luanda.[142] In 1798, António Lourenço de Carvalho, a merchant who had spent several years in Galangue, declared that he had business with the Doctor Tamagnini and Domingos Gomes Loureiro in Lisbon, as well as with Narcizo Alves Pereira and Frutuoso José da Cruz in Rio.[143] However, the closest links that Benguela held were with Rio de Janeiro. For example, in 1794, Lourenço Pereira Tavares, a wealthy merchant born in Luanda who was also a member of the *Senado da Câmara* (Benguela municipal council) and captain of the local militia, was prevented from embarking the number of slaves he had planned to ship to Brazil on his own vessel.[144] Although Tavares instructed the captain of the vessel to embark 200 slaves of his own and reserve the remainder of the space on the vessel for a group of Benguela merchants, his instructions were ignored by the ship's captain, who argued that he had orders from Tavares' partners in Rio to allow Tavares to embark only 82 slaves.[145]

This episode illustrates the fact that Benguela merchants were often subordinate to their primary financial sponsors in Brazil. The ship that Tavares claimed to own was in fact owned in partnership with merchants in Rio de Janeiro, which might explain why the ship captain refused to carry the number of slaves indicated by Tavares. The subordination and dependency were so acute, argued the governor of Benguela, that the city depended on Brazil for provisions for slaves taken across the Atlantic.[146] In 1799, the governor remarked that Benguela relied on 'imports of commodities and other goods traded here, including manioc flour and other supplies, both for merchants, slaves [held for shipping to Brazil] and people in general.'[147]

Wills written by Benguela merchants also provide insight into the high level of dependency on Brazil – primarily Rio – for capital funding. José Souza, for example, an important merchant in the late 1790s, did business with José Ferreira da Fonseca from Lisbon, but his primary deals were conducted with Jerônimo Pereira and his brothers in Rio, with whom he co-owned the ship *Nossa Senhora da Piedade*.[148] Luiz Antonio Gomes was the co-owner of the *corveta Nossa Senhora do Rosário Santo António e Almas*, together with Francisco José in Rio.[149] In 1795, José António da Costa, who was the owner of the *sumaca São Lourenço*, had commercial ties with the Rio merchants Bernardo Lourenço Vianna, António Teixeira Passos, Manoel Ferreira da Cruz and Manoel de Souza Guimarães.[150] In 1800, José Francisco had close links with the Lisbon-based José Pereira de Souza, but also worked in partnership with Rio-based Bernardo Lourenço Vianna from Rio.[151]

António José de Barros provides an interesting example of Rio's hegemony in the trade with Benguela. Barros was appointed *sargento mor* of Benguela in 1787, after Gregório José Mendes was assigned to lead an expedition to Cabo Negro.[152] He had many debts when he arrived in Benguela in the early 1780s. He had been partners in Rio with Narcizo Luis Alves Pereira and Francisco António de Araújo Pereira, whom he still owed 79,294 *réis* in 1796. He was paying for a debt that his father had incurred with Francisco de Araújo Pereira in Rio, in addition to still carrying debts from his youth. Furthermore, Barros owed his brother money, a debt incurred from transactions in Rio with goods shipped from Porto to Rio by his brothers. In addition, Barros owed 1,767,408 *réis* in cash to his brother-in-law, Manoel Ferreira da Silva Guimarães, who had been sent to Luanda as a political or criminal exile in 1788.[153]

In 1796, Barros appointed residents of Bahia and Pernambuco as executors of his will and maintained close contact with former Benguela

merchants who had returned to Rio after decades in Benguela: '[I] declare that I have accounts with [the following Rio-based merchants] Narciso Luis Alves Pereira, Frutuoso José da Cruz, Captain José Maria Arsénio de Lacerda and António José da Costa (who left Benguela not long ago).'[154] However, his primary associate in Rio was Manoel Gonçalves Moledo. This commercial partnership ended in 1796 after Barros received a letter with insults from Moledo in Benguela. Barros stated, 'I had another commercial society with Captain Manoel Gonçalves Moledo, resident in the same Rio [de Janeiro]. Moledo owes me a significant amount of money, but has raised questions about the debt and has tried to damage my reputation so much that I found myself obligated to travel to Rio on my ship *Pensamento Feliz* to settle with him financial issues related to the commercial society.'[155] Despite the end of the partnership with Moledo, Barros was still able to return from Rio to Benguela with a significant cargo of goods to trade in slaves.[156]

CONCLUSION

The micro-dynamic of the trade between Angola and Brazil reveals a set of multilayered and nuanced ties ingrained in family, friendship and religion. By creating such networks, merchants compensated for the lack of institutional and legal frameworks to provide safety for business. These networks allowed them to conduct business in cultural and social environments radically different from the ones they might have known in Brazil and Portugal. Merchants born in Angola, on the other hand, benefited from the Atlantic-wide nature of such networks because these gave them sufficient cultural elements to operate outside Angola if and when they needed. Mobility was a crucial dimension to the micro-dynamic of the trade. In Benguela, it was part of the early stages of slaving in the first decades of the eighteenth century. Later in that century, it frequently translated into privileged and tight-knit links with Rio de Janeiro – the origin of most of the goods and funding for purchasing slaves in that city.

ENDNOTES

1. Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Baltimore, 1989); Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni, 'The Name and the Game: Unequal Exchange and the Historiographic Marketplace' in Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero (eds), *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe* (Baltimore, 1991), 1-11; Carlo

Ginzburg, 'Microhistory: Two or Three Things that I Know about it', Critical Inquiry, 20 (1993); Jacques Revel, 'Microanalysis and the Construction of the Social', in Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt (eds), *Histories: French Constructions of the Past* (New York, 1995), 493-502; Florike Egmond and Peter Mason, *The Mammoth and the Mouse: Microhistory and Morphology* (Baltimore, 1997); Matti Peltonen, 'Clues, Margins, and Monads: the Micro-macro Link in Historical Research', History and Theory, 40 (2001), 347-359; Jill Lapore, 'Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography', *Journal of American History*, 88 (2001); Sigurdur Magnússon, 'The Singularization of History: Social History and Microhistory within the Postmodern State of Knowledge', *Journal of Social History*, 2003.

2. Such framework has been utilized to examine commercial ties between West Africa and Bahia. See Pierre Verger, *Fluxo e Refluxo do Tráfico de Escravos entre o Golfo do Benin e a Bahia de Todos os Santos dos Séculos XVII a XIX* (Bahia, 1988); Pierre Verger, *Os Libertos, Sete Caminhos na Liberdade de Escravos da Bahia no Século XIX* (Bahia, 1992); Milton Guran, *Agudás, o os Brasileiros do Benim* (Rio de Janeiro, 1999); Lorand Matory, 'The English Professors of Brazil, On the Diasporic Roots of the Yorubá Nation', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41 (1999), 72-103; Robin Law, 'Ouidah a Pre-colonial Urban Centre in Coastal West Africa, 1727-1892', in David Anderson and Richard Rathbone (eds), *Africa's Urban Past* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000); Robin Law, 'The Port of Ouidah in the Atlantic Community, 17th to 19th Centuries', in Horst Pietschmann (ed.), *Atlantic History: History of the Atlantic System, 1580-1830* (Gottingen, 2002), 349-364; Robin Law, 'A Comunidade Brasileira de Uidá e os Últimos Anos do Tráfico Atlântico de Escravos, 1850-1866', Afro-Ásia, 27 (2002), 41-77; Silke Strickrodt, 'Afro-European Trade Relations on the Western Slave Coast, 16th to 19th Centuries', PhD Dissertation, University of Stirling, 2002; Mieko Nishida *Slavery and Identity: Ethnicity, Gender, and Race in Salvador, Brazil, 1808-1888* (Bloomington, 2003); Elisée Soumonni, 'Afro-Brazilian Communities of the Bight of Benin in the Nineteenth Century', in Paul Lovejoy and David Trotman *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora* (London, 2003); Robin Law, 'Francisco Félix de Souza in West Africa, 1820-1849', in José Curto and Paul Lovejoy, *Enslaving Connections, Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil during the Era of Slavery* (New York, 2004); Silke Strickrodt, 'Afro-Brazilians of the Western Slave Coast in the Nineteenth Century', in José Curto and Paul Lovejoy *Enslaving Connections, Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil during the Era of Slavery* (New York, 2004), 213-243; Alberto da Costa e Silva, Francisco Félix de Souza *Mercador de Escravos Rio de Janeiro* (Nova Fronteira, Rio de Janeiro, 2004); Robin Law *Ouidah: the Social History a West Africa Slaving Port* (Ohio, 2004).
3. For a limited list of northern-Atlantic focused studies, see David Armitage, (ed.), *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (New York, 2002); Horst

Pietschmann (ed.), *Atlantic History: History of the Atlantic System, 1580-1830* (Gottingen, 2002); Peter Coclanis (ed.), *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel* (Columbia, 2005); *Bernard Bailyn, Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (Cambridge, 2005). Note that Coclanis' critique of Bailyn's book glosses over the fact that the latter is skewed towards the northern Atlantic. See Peter Coclanis, 'Drang Nach Osten: Bernard Bailyn, the World-Island, and the Idea of Atlantic History', *Journal of World History*, 13 (2002).

4. For studies that focus primarily on Luanda, see Joseph Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Wisconsin, 1988); Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, *O Trato dos Viventes: Formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul*, (São Paulo, 2000); José Curto, *Enslaving Spirits: The Portuguese-Brazilian Alcohol Trade at Luanda and its Hinterland, c. 1550-1830* (Leiden, 2004); Jaime Rodrigues, *De Costa a Costa: Escravos, Marinheiros e Intermediários do Tráfico Negreiro de Angola ao Rio de Janeiro (1780-1860)* (São Paulo, 2005).
5. David Eltis, 'The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment', *William and Mary Quarterly* 58 (2001), 17-42; David Eltis, 'The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A Reassessment based on the Second Edition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade Dataset.' Unpublished paper.
6. John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (Cambridge, 1998), 61-62; Herbert Klein, 'The Atlantic Slave Trade to 1650', in Stuart Schwartz, *Tropical Babylons: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680* (Chapel Hill, 2004), 211-212.
7. Joseph Miller, 'The Slave Trade in Congo and Angola', in Martin Kilson and Robert I. Rotberg (eds), *The African Diaspora: Interpretative Essays* (Cambridge, 1976); Joseph Miller, 'The Paradoxes of Impoverishment in the Atlantic Zone', in David Birmingham e Phyllis Martin (eds), *History of Central Africa* (London, 1983); Joseph Miller, 'Central Africa during the Era of the Slave Trade, c. 1490s-1850s', in Linda Heywood, *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (Cambridge, 2002). Beatrix Heintze advances an alternative view that accounts for early, if brief, Portuguese plans to turn Angola into a sugar producing colony. Early, and equally failed, similar attempts to set up sugar plantations in Africa are surveyed by David Eltis. See David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge, 2001).
8. Roquinaldo Ferreira, 'Transforming Atlantic Slaving: Trade, Warfare, and Territorial Control in Angola, 1650-1800.' PhD Dissertation, UCLA, 2003; Joseph Miller, 'Imports at Luanda, Angola: 1785-1823,' in Gerhard Liesegang, Helma Pasch, and Adam Jones, eds., *Figuring African Trade: Proceedings of the Symposium on the Quantification and Structure of the Import and Export and Long Distance Trade of Africa in the 19th Century (c. 1800-1913)* (Berlin, 1986), 165-246.
9. Ferreira, 'Transforming Atlantic Slaving.'

10. 'Ofício do Desembargador Fiscal' on April 10, 1811, Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro, hereafter IHGB, Dl 1132, 05.
11. 'Ofício do Cônsul Brasileiro em Luanda' on February 24, 1827, Arquivo do Itamarati, hereafter AI, doc. 676-4-3, fls. 1-1v.
12. 'Ofício do Desembargador Fiscal' on April 10, 1811, IHGB, Dl 1132, 05.
13. Joseph Miller, 'Legal Portuguese Slaving from Angola. Some Preliminary Indications of Volume and Direction, 1760-1830', *Revue Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer*, 62 (1975), 145.
14. Herbert Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Princeton, 1978), 181-212.
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16. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, 1993). For alternative and critical views, see Lorand Matory, 'The English Professors of Brazil, On the Diasporic Roots of the Yorubá Nation', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 41 (1999); Herman Bennett, 'The Subject in the Plot: National Boundaries and the "History" of the Black Atlantic', *African Studies Review*, 43 (2000); Charles Piot, 'Atlantic Aporias: Africa and Gilroy's Black Atlantic', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 100 (2001); Patrick Manning, 'Africa and the African Diaspora: New Directions of Study', *Journal of African History*, 44 (2003).
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18. Harvey Feinberg, *Africans and Europeans in West Africa: Elminians and Dutchmen on the Gold Coast during the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1989), p. 41; Christopher DeCorse, 'Culture Contact, Continuity and Change on the Gold Coast, AD 1400-1900', *African Archaeological Review* 10 (1992) p. 164 ; Christopher DeCorse, 'The Europeans in West Africa: Culture Contact, Continuity and Change', in Graham Connah, *Transformations in Africa: Essays in Africa's Later Past* (London, 1998), p. 222; Rebecca Shumway, 'Between the Castle and the Golden Stool: Transformations in Fante Society in the Eighteenth Century', PhD Dissertation, Emory University, 2004; Jon Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, 2005); Christopher DeCorse, 'The Danes on the Gold Coast: Culture Change and the European

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22. Law and Mann, 'West Africa in the Atlantic Community', 334. See also Robin Law, 'The English in Western Africa to 1700', Nicolas Canny (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire* I (Oxford, 1998), p. 262. For a similar view, see Eltis, The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas; David Eltis, 'African and European Relations in the Last Century of the Transatlantic Slave Trade', Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau (ed.), *From Slave Trade to Empire: Europe and the Colonization of Black Africa, 1780s-1880s* (London and New York, 2004), 24. David Eltis e David Richardson, 'Prices of African Slaves newly arrived in the Americas, 1763-1865: New Evidence on Long-Run Trends and Regional Differentials', David Eltis, Frank Lewis e Kenneth Sokoloff (eds), *Slavery and the Development of the Americas* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 187.
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24. Ferreira, 'Transforming Atlantic Slaving.'
25. Linda Heywood, 'Portuguese into African: The Eighteenth-Century Central African Background to Atlantic Creole Cultures', Linda Heywood (ed.), *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (Cambridge, 2000).
26. Jan Vansina, 'Ambaca Society and the Slave Trade', ca. 1760-1845, *Journal of African History*, 46, 2005.
27. 'Ofício de Rodrigo de Souza Coutinho' on September 14, 1799, Arquivo Histórico Nacional de Angola, hereafter AHNA, cód. 254, fls. 176v.-177v.
28. Selma Pantoja, 'Inquisição, Degredo e Mestiçagem em Angola no século XVIII.' Revista Lusófona de Ciência da Religião, 5/6 (2004), 117-136. See also Ross Little Bardwell, 'The Governors of Portugal's South Atlantic Empire in the Seventeenth Century: Social Background, Qualifications, Selection, and Reward.' PhD. Dissertation, University of California at Santa Barbara, 1974; Anne Pardo, 'A Comparative Study of the Portuguese Colonies of Angola and Brazil and their Interdependence from 1648 to 1825.' PhD Dissertation, Boston University, 1977.

29. 'Provisão do Governador de Angola' on March 4, 1849, AHNA, cód. 299, fls. 350v.-351.
30. 'Requerimento de Daniel Corrêa da Silva' on September 3, 1799, AHNA, cód. 254, fls. 216v.-217.
31. 'Petição de Alexandre dos Reis Barboza' on October 27, 1799, AHNA, cód. 254, fls. 116-116v.
32. Ferreira, 'Transforming Atlantic Slaving.'
33. Robin Law, *The Slave Coast of West Africa* (Oxford, 1997), 166. In 1714, for example, a slave ship bound from Lisbon to West Africa came across four Portuguese, two French, one Dutch and one British ship in the Whydah region. See 'Carta de João Diniz de Azevedo (Costa da Mina) para Francisco Pinheiro' on December 13, 1714, in *Luis Lisanti, Negócios Coloniais: Uma Correspondência Comercial do Século XVIII* 2 (Brasília, 1973) p. 541.
34. Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage through the Worlds of the Slave Trade* (Oxford, 2002), 212.
35. 'CCU' on July 23, 1706, AHU, Bahia, cx. 5, doc. 433. For an overview of the Dutch-Portuguese rivalry along the West African coast dating back to the early seventeenth century, see John Vogt, *Portuguese Rule on the Gold Coast, 1469-1683* (Athens, 1979); Curtin, *Economic Change in Precolonial Africa*, 100-105. For overviews of Dutch-Portuguese rivalry throughout Africa, Asia and Africa, see Jonathan Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740* (Oxford, 1989); Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (London, 1998), 187-211. See also Stephanie Smallwood, 'Salt-Water Slaves: African Enslavement, Forced Migration, and Settlement in the Anglo-Atlantic World, 1660-1700.' PhD Dissertation, Duke University, 1999, 22-23, 25; Harms, *The Diligent*, 133. For the diplomatic context in which the peace treaties between the Dutch and the Portuguese were negotiated, see Evaldo Cabral de Melo Neto, *O Negócio do Brasil: Portugal, os Países Baixos e o Nordeste (1641-1669)* (Lisboa, 2001), chapter 8.
36. 'Carta de Antonio Marques Gomes' on December 30, 1756, AHU, São Tomé, cx. 9, doc. 83.
37. Pieter Emmer and Wim Klooster, 'The Dutch Atlantic, 1600-1800: Expansion without Empire', Itinerario, 23 (1999), 60, pp. 48-69; Jan de Vries, 'The Dutch Atlantic Economies', in Coclanis, *The Atlantic Economy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*, 9.
38. The fact that the payment of the ten percent fee did not stop Dutch ships from attacking ships from Brazil might account for the discrepancy in the number of detained ships recorded in Portuguese sources and scholarly analyses based on Dutch sources. Thus, while Postma indicates that only two ships were captured by the Dutch in 1715, Pernambucan authorities reported eight Bahian and Pernambucan ships captured that year. See Postma and Schwartz, 'Brazil and Holland as Commercial Partners on the West African

Coast', in Johannes Postma and Victor Enthoven (eds), *Riches from Atlantic Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585-1817* (Leiden, 2003); 'Carta Governador de Pernambuco' on January 20, 1716, AHU, Pernambuco, cx. 27, doc. 2466. The same discrepancy is observed in the number of slaves taken from Brazilian ships. Between 1717 and 1718, for example, authorities estimated that 3,000 slaves were taken by the Dutch, differing sharply from Postma's estimation of 1,480 slaves lost during the same period. See Postma and Schwartz, 'Brazil and Holland as Commercial Partners on the West African coast', 410-411. For the Portuguese side, see 'CCU' on May 4, 1719, AHU, cód. 21, fls. 315v.-316v. For contemporary accounts of Dutch attacks on Brazilian ships by a Bahia-based merchant, see 'Carta de Baltazar Alvarez de Araújo (Bahia) para Francisco Pinheiro' on January 15, 1719, in Lisanti, Negócios Coloniais, vol. 1, 93; 'Carta de Baltazar Alvarez de Araujo (Bahia) para Francisco Pinheiro' on April 17, 1719, in Lisanti, Negócios Coloniais, vol. 1, 94; 'Carta de Baltazar Alvarez de Araujo (Bahia) para Francisco Pinheiro' on October 30, 1719, in Lisanti, Negócios Coloniais, vol. 1, 97. For a late report of the impact of the ten percent fee, see 'Carta da Mesa de Inspeção da Bahia' on July 31, 1789, ANTT, Ministério do Reino, maço 599, cx. 702.

39. The uncertainties of attacks on the West African coast seem to have triggered a minor depression in the Bahian slave economy in 1715 by making would-be traders shy away from purchasing slave ships and entering the trade. See 'Carta de Baltazar Alvarez de Araújo para (Bahia) para Francisco Pinheiro Neto (Lisboa)' on July 13, 1715, in Lisanti, Negócios Coloniais, vol. 1, 54; 'Carta de Baltazar Alvarez de Araújo para (Bahia) para Francisco Pinheiro Neto (Lisboa)' on December 9, 1715, in Lisanti, Negócios Coloniais, vol. 1, 64. For the view of the viceroy of Brazil, see Verger, Fluxo e Refluxo do Tráfico de Escravos, 63.
40. 'CCU' on August 23, 1720, AHU, Bahia, cx. 14, doc. 1185.
41. 'CCU' on May 4, 1719, AHU, cód. 21, fls. 315v.-316v. In the same year, a British frigate called into Recife on the way to the Caribbean after patrolling off the West African coast on behalf of Brazilian ships. See 'Carta do Governador de Pernambuco' on July 17, 1729, AHU, Pernambuco, cx. 39, doc. 3488.
42. In 1719, for example, responding to a petition sent to Lisbon by Brazilian merchants, a Portuguese frigate was dispatched to West Africa. See 'CCU' on December 9, 1719, AHU, cód. 21, fls. 327-327v.
43. 'CCU' on November 9, 1723, AHU, Bahia, cx. 18, doc. 1599; 'Carta de Baltazar Alvarez de Araújo (Bahia) para Francisco Pinheiro' on March 25, 1722, in *Lisanti, Negócios Coloniais*, vol. 1, 106.
44. Feinberg, *Africans and Europeans in West Africa: Elminians and Dutchmen on the Gold Coast during the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1989), 41.
45. 'Carta de Antonio Marques Gomes' on December 30, 1756, AHU, São Tomé, cx. 9, doc. 83.

46. 'CCU' on October 17, 1721, AHU, cód. 907, fls. 160v.-161v.
47. The deal played into widely held fears that the centre of gravity of the trade between Brazil and Europe was shifting to West Africa and that Portugal was gradually being excluded from it. See 'CCU' on October 25, 1721, AHU, cód. 907, fls. 171-173; Carl Hanson, 'Monopoly and Contraband in the Portuguese Tobacco Trade, 1624-1702', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, XIX (1982), 161; Jean Dell Rae Flory, 'Bahian Society in the Mid-Colonial Period: The Sugar Planters, Tobacco Growers, Merchants and Artisans of Salvador and the Reconcavo, 1680-1725.' PhD Dissertation, University of Texas, 1978, 190; J. R. Russell-Wood, *The Portuguese Empire, 1415-1808: A World on the Move* (Baltimore, 1998), 141.
48. Johannes Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1815* (Cambridge, 1990), 77; 'Parecer do Conselho Ultramarino' on February 15, 1726, AHU, Rio de Janeiro, cx. 16, doc. 1742.
49. 'CCU' on May 13, 1723, AHU, cód. 908, fls. 41v.-42. For the fort built in 1731, see also Harms, *The Diligent*, 238.
50. The first of the forts was built in 1721 and was staffed by troops provided by Brazilian authorities in Bahia and guarded by two frigates maintained by Torres. See 'CCU' on May 13, 1723, AHU, cód. 908, fls. 41v.-42. For the fort built in 1731, see also Harms, *The Diligent*, 238. For examples of Portuguese ships seizing Dutch ships, see Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade*, 77; 'Parecer do Conselho Ultramarino' on February 15, 1726, AHU, Rio de Janeiro, cx. 16, doc. 1742.
51. 'Carta Régia' on December 20, 1725, AHU, cód. 546, fl. 2v.; 'Carta Régia' on January 21, 1726. AHU, cód. 546, fls. 3; 'Carta dos Oficiais do Senado da Câmara de Luanda' on April 17, 1728, AHU, Angola, cx. 24, doc. 36; 'Carta Régia' in 1728, AHN, cód. 1, fls. 48-49. Other merchants, such as a former holder of the contract to collect duties on slaves exported from Luanda followed suit. See 'Carta do Governador de Angola' on December 20, 1729, AHU, Angola, cx. 24, doc. 133; 'Carta Régia' on October 23, 1730, AHU, cód. 546, fls. 49-49v.
52. For an account of Torres' departure from West Africa after his fort was destroyed by the Dutch, see Harms, *The Diligent*, 240. For a later account of the episode, see 'Ofício Gaspar Caldas' on Septermber 16, 1743, AHU, Rio de Janeiro, cx. 41, doc. 44.
53. In 1735, he arrived to Luanda from Rio de Janeiro with four slave ships and began shipping slaves to Santos. See 'Carta do Governador de Angola' on August 10, 1736, AHU, Angola, cx. 29.
54. 'Requerimento de Manoel da Silva' on October 22, 1735, AHU, Rio de Janeiro, cx. 31, doc. 21; 'Petição de Manoel da Silva' on January 26, 1736, AHU, Angola, cx. 29, doc. 12; 'Requerimento de Manoel da Silva' on April 15, 1738, AHU, Rio de Janeiro, cx. 35, doc. 3; 'Petição de José de Torres' on September 3, 1739,

AHU, Angola, cx. 31, doc. 59.

55. 'Registro de Óbitos da Paróquia de Remédios, 1748-1779', ABL, fl. 243.
56. 'Carta Régia' on October 23, 1730, AHU, cód. 546, fls. 49-49v.; 'Requerimento de Vasco Lourenço Veloso' on May 11, 1731, AHU, Angola, cx. 25, doc. 100.
57. 'Carta Régia' in 1728, AHN, cód. 1, fls. 47-48; 'Carta dos Oficiais do Senado da Câmara de Luanda' on April 17, 1728, AHU, Angola, cx. 24, doc. 36; 'Carta dos Oficiais do Senado da Câmara de Luanda' on April 17, 1728, AHU, Angola, cx. 24, doc. 36; 'Carta Régia' on May 12, 1728, AHU, cód. 546, fl. 26v.; 'Carta Régia' on May 19, 1729, AHU, Angola, cx. 24, doc. 133; 'Carta do Governador' on December 22, 1734, AHU, Angola, cx. 27, doc. 159; 'Carta do Governador de Angola' on December 20, 1729, AHU, Angola, cx. 24, doc. 133.
58. 'Ordem Régia' on June 26, 1742, BNRJ, doc. I-12, 3, 31, fls. 79v.-80.
59. 'Requerimento de Manoel da Silva', undated but around 1735, AHU, Rio de Janeiro, cx. 31, doc, 21; 'Petição de Francisco Xavier' on February 26, 1737, AHU, Angola, cx. 30, doc. 7.
60. Biblioteca Municipal de Luanda, hereafter BML, cód. 37, fl. 17v.
61. BML, cód. 37, fls. 116v., 128v.
62. BML, cód. 37, fl. 5.
63. By then, his business was worth one hundred cruzados. See 'Carta Régia' on June 18, 1799, AHNA, cód. 255, fls. 16v.-17.
64. 'Carta do Governador de Angola' on November 18, 1811, AHNA, cód. 323, fl. 38.
65. 'Carta para o Governador de Angola' on November 28, 1826, Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino, hereafter AHU, cód. 542.
66. 'Representação de Joaquim Martins Mourão' on November 18, 1825, AHU, Angola, cx. 150, doc. 4; 'Representação de Joaquim Martins Mourão' in 1825, AHU, Angola, cx. 150, doc. 7.
67. Roquinaldo Ferreira, 'Dos Sertões ao Atlântico: Tráfico Ilegal de Escravos e Comércio Lícito em Angola.' MA Thesis, UFRJ, 1996.
68. 'Carta de António Manoel de Noronha' on January 23, 1827, AHU, cód. 542; 'Despacho do requerimento de José Joaquim Ferreira Torres on October 6, 1827, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 72v.
69. 'Despacho do requerimento de António Francisco Ribeiro on January 29, 1828, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 80v.; 'Despacho do requerimento de José Polilo' on July 8, 1828, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 95v.
70. 'Despacho do requerimento de Francisco José Gomes Guimarães' on December 12, 1828, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 121v.
71. 'Despacho do requerimento de José Pedro de Andrade' on June 21, 1828, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 94.
72. 'Despacho do requerimento de Dona Maria Ferreira da Silva' on September 13, 1828, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 105.

73. 'Despacho do requerimento de Estevão da Cruz' on September 12, 1828, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 105.
74. Souza's will named his granddaughter as heir of two-thirds of his assets. See 'Testamento de José de Souza' on April 15, 1780, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 21, doc. 12; ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 2, doc. 3 B, fls. 30-35.
75. The Bahian daughter was named his heir when he wrote his will in 1789. See 'Testamento de Francisco Xavier dos Reis' on December 4, 1789, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 24, doc. 17.
76. 'Testamento de Joaquim Antonio da Roza' on September 12, 1799, Arquivo Histórico Nacional da Torre do Tombo, hereafter ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 12, doc. 8.
77. 'Testamento de José Francisco' on May 28, 1800, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 15, doc. 6.
78. 'Testamento de António José de Barros' on September 10, 1799, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 2, doc. 3 A, fls. 16-17.
79. 'Requerimento de Joaquim Vieira de Souza' in 1818, AHNA, cód. 361, fl. 60.
80. 'Requerimento de Joaquim Teixeira Macedo' in 1818, AHNA, cód. 361, fl. 65.
81. 'Carta do Capitão Mor do Presídio de Caconda' on February 20, 1789, AHU, Angola, cx. 74, doc. 49; 'Depoimento de António Lourenço de Carvalho' in 1803, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 22, doc. 5; 'Primeiro Testamento de José António de Carvalho' on January 8, 1798, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 22, doc. 5.
82. 'Despacho do requerimento de João Pedro de Andrade' on September 9, 1828, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 104.
83. 'Despacho do requerimento de João Pedro de Andrade' on September 15, 1828, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 105v.
84. 'Despacho do requerimento de Manoel José da Costa' on October 5, 1829, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 167.
85. 'Despacho do requerimento de José Pedro Cota' on October 18, 1826, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 23.
86. 'Despacho do requerimento de Sebastião Rodrigues da Silva on October 19, 1827, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 69.
87. 'Despacho do requerimento de José Joaquim Ferreira' on October, 6 1828, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 110v.
88. 'Despacho do requerimento de Justiniano José dos Reis' on May 19, 1829, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 144v.
89. 'Despacho do requerimento de Francisco Ferreira Gomes' on June 4, 1829, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 148v.
90. 'Carta do Governador de Benguela' on February 28, 1798, AHNA, cód. 256, fls. 59v.-61.

91. 'Notícias de Benguela e seus Distritos em 1797', IHGB, lata 32, pasta 2, fl. 7v.-8.
92. ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 2, doc. 3 A, fl. 16.
93. 'Despacho do requerimento de Justiniano José dos Reis on June 6, 1827, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 54.
94. 'Despacho do requerimento de Francisco Pereira da Rocha on September 28, 1827, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 67v.
95. Furthermore, Barros left instructions to the executor of his will that he wished to be buried in Rio de Janeiro at the Ordem Terceira de Nossa Senhora do Monte do Carmo if he died in Rio. See 'Testamento de António José de Barros' on September 10, 1799, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 2, doc. 3A.
96. 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on October 24, 1799, AHNA, 441, fl. 109.
97. 'Testamento de José António da Costa' on April 17, 1795, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 30, doc. 11.
98. 'Testamento de José de Souza' on April 15, 1780, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 21, doc. 12.
99. 'Primeiro Testamento de José António de Carvalho' on January 8, 1798, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 22, doc. 5.
100. 'Receita do Tesoureiro do Hospital de Benguela' in 1774, AHU, Angola, cx. 61, doc. 39; 'Carta do Juiz de Fora de Benguela' on July 28, 1778, AHU, Angola, cx. 61; 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on October 12, 1788, AHU, Angola, cx. 73, doc. 44; 'Relação dos Negociantes da Praça de São Felipe de Benguela' on June 22, 1793, AHU, Angola, cx. 76; 'Mapa das Pessoas Livres e Escravos de Benguela' on June 15, 1796, AHNA, cód. 441, fl. 19; 'Mapa das Pessoas Livres, Escravos e Casas de Sobrado, Terras, Cobertas de Palha, e Sanzalas' in Benguela in 1796, IHGB, lata 81, pasta 2; 'Mapa de Ocupações de Benguela' in 1798, AHNA, cód. 441, fl. 82; 'Ofício do Governador Interino de Benguela' on August 17, 1800, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 123v.-129. Elias Alexandre da Silva Corrêa, História de Angola (Lisboa, 1937), vol. 1, 38-39.
101. 'Autos de Residência do Juiz de Fora de Benguela' in 1780, AHU, Angola, cx. 63, doc. 2; 'Devassa contra João Batista dos Santos Bonnate' in 1798, AHU, Angola, cx. 89, doc. 67.
102. 'Autos de Residência do Juiz de Fora de Benguela' in 1780, AHU, Angola, cx. 63, doc. 2.
103. 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on January 6, 1797, AHNA, cód. 442, fl. 27. In 1799, when French corsairs attacked four ships in Benguela, the city's merchants were left with only one vessel of their own. See 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on April 18, 1799, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 86-87. For information on French corsairs in Benguela, see 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on March 5, 1798, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 99v.-101; 'Conta do Governador de Angola' on May 12, 1795, AHU, cód. 409; 'Carta Régia' on

September 22, 1796, AHU, cód. 546; 'Termo de Vereação' on March 6, 1799, ANTT, AHMF, livro 291.

113. 'Ofício de Luiz Cândido Cordeiro Pinheiro Furtado' on September 26, 1785, AHU, Angola, cx. 70, doc. 49. Maia left for Rio shortly thereafter and never fulfilled his promise. In the end, the expedition to Cabo Negro was primarily funded by another Benguela merchant, Gregório José Mendes, who was appointed commander of the expedition after contributing 500 slaves to work as porters. For information on Mendes' role as the commander of the expedition and his business in Benguela, see 'Ofício de António José Valente' on June 29, AHU, Angola, cx. 70. 'Carta Patente de Gregório José Mendes' on January 17, 1786, AHNA, cód. 311, fls. 58-58v.; 'Carta do Governador de Angola' on August 3, 1786, AHU, cód. 1642; 'Carta do Governador de Angola' on August 12, 1787, AHU, cód. 1642; 'Carta do Governador de Angola' on February 26, 1788, AHNA, cód. 82, fl. 117v.-118; 'Testamento de Domingos Rodrigues' on September 12, 1773, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 28, doc. 8, fls. 28v-29v. For details about Mendes' Portuguese background, see ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 29, doc. 10.
114. 'Carta Patente para José Rodrigues Maia' on July 6, 1776, AHU, Angola, cx. 77, doc. 66.
115. 'Carta do Governador de Angola' on January 17, 1791, AHU, Angola, cx. 75, doc. 2.
116. 'Letra de Risco' on April 26, 1790, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 19, doc. 13; 'Testamento de Francisco Dias de Oliveira' on August 20, 1790, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 19, doc. 13, fls. 102-106.
117. 'Petição de Joaquim José de Andrade e Souza Menezes' in 1789, AHU, Angola, cx. 74, doc. 49.
118. In 1800, for example, the governor of Benguela ordered the arrest of José Maria de Souza Ribeiro, then in Kakonda, who owed a significant amount of goods to Joaquim José de Andrade e Souza Menezes. See 'Carta do Tenente Regente do Presídio de Novo Redondo' on August 7, 1797, AHNA, cód. 256, fls. 4v.-5v.; 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on October 30, 1797, AHNA, cód. 442; 'Carta do Regente de Novo Redondo' on January 12, 1799, AHNA, cód. 256, fls. 197-198.
119. 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on October 24, 1799, AHNA, 441, fl. 109.
120. 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on August 12, 1796, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 13v.-14; 'Depoimento de Inácio Teixeira Carneiro' on December 4, 1798, AHU, Angola, cx. 89, doc. 67;
121. Curto, 'Movers of Slaves.'
122. 'Autos de Habilitação de António Manoel' in 1786, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 3, doc. 14.
123. 'Petição de Manoel José da Cruz' in 1789, AHU, Angola, cx. 74, doc. 49. Cruz

later clarified that he had actually lived 20 years in the interior of Benguela and that he still maintained a hub there for his agents and to keep goods used to trade for slaves. See 'Depoimento de Manoel José da Cruz' on September 23, 1789, AHU, Angola, cx. 74, doc. 49.

124 'Despacho do requerimento de Floriano Pires Chaves' on September 23, 1826, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 19v.

125. 'Despacho do requerimento de Antonio Joaquim' on March 4, 1828, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 84.

126. 'Despacho do requerimento de Joaquim José da Silva' on April 17, 1828, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 89.

127. 'Despacho do requerimento de Domingos Rodrigues November 28, 1829, AHNA, cód. 7182, fl. 174.

128. Curto, 'Movers of Slaves', 7.

129. 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on August 12, 1796, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 13v.-14. For the death of Barrocas, see 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on August 23, 1796, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 14v.-15; 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on December 13, 1796, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 23-24.

130. 'Depoimento de António José da Costa' on September 16, 1789, AHU, Angola, cx. 74, doc. 49; 'Carta de Francisco António do Amaral' on April 21, 1789, AHU, Angola, cx. 74, doc. 15; 'Carta do Governador de Angola' on December 18, 1791, AHU, cód. 1628; 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on July 27, July 27, 1796, AHU, Angola, cx. 84; 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on August 23, 1796, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 14v.-15; 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on December 13, 1796, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 23-24. In 1797, Costa still had a property in Catumbela near Benguela. See 'Notícias de Benguela e seus Distritos em 1797', IHGB, lata 32, pasta 2, fl. 50v.

131. 'Notícias de Benguela e seus Distritos em 1797', IHGB, lata 32, pasta 2, fl. 7; 'Carta do Governador de Angola' on March 2, 1799, AHNA, cód. 247, fls. 43-44v.

132. 'Carta Geral desta Capitania (Benguela)' on March 28, 1798, AHNA, cód. 441, fls. 31v.-35.

133. 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on March 16, 1797, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 30-32; 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on February 28, 1797, ANTT, Ministério do Reino, maço 604, cx. 707.

134. 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on January 24, 1797, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 27v.-28.

135. 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on May 3, 1796, AHNA, cód. 518, fl. 236.

136. 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on August 12, 1796, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 13v.-14.

137. 'Mapa das Pessoas Livres, Escravos e Casas de Sobrado, Terras, Cobertas de Palha, e Senzalas' in Benguela in 1796, IHGB, lata 81, pasta 2, fl. 8. In 1798,

a Benguela merchant said, 'I declare that I gave a young slave called João to captain José da Silva Teixeira to learn to be a sailor', which strongly suggests that Teixeira was living in Benguela. See 'Primeiro Testamento de José António de Carvalho' on January 8, 1798, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 22, doc. 5.

138. 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on January 17, 1798, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 58-59v.
139. 'Caderno de Receita e Despesa do Inventário de António Fernandes da Silva' on June 11, 1803, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 4, doc. 20.
140. 'Testamento de António Pinto de Almeida' on January 31, 1793, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 5, doc. 3 A.
141. 'Testamento de Aurélio Veríssimo Vieira' on September 2, 1805, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 14, doc. 1, fls. 8v.-11v.
142. 'Primeiro Testamento de José António de Carvalho' on January 8, 1798, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 22, doc. 5.
143. 'Depoimento de Lourenço Pereira Tavares' on September 25, 1789, AHU, Angola, cx. 74, doc. 49.
144. 'Petição de Lourenço Pereira Tavares' on August 12, 1794, AHU, Angola, cx. 80, doc. 52.
145. 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on January 14, 1798, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 51v.-52. In Luanda, legislation mandating ships to carry supplies for slaves from Brazil had been in place at least since 1783. See 'Portaria' on January 9, 1783, AHNA, cód. 272, fls. 49v.-50; 'Ofício do Governador de Angola' on September 2, 1790, AHNA, cód. 83; 'Ofício do Governador de Angola' on September 2, 1790, ANRJ, cx. 502.
146. 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on July 1, 1799, AHNA, cód. 441, fl. 107v.
147. 'Testamento de José de Souza' on April 15, 1780, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 21, doc. 12.
148. 'Testamento de Luiz António Gomes' on June 8, 1785, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 3, doc. 14.
149. 'Testamento de José António da Costa' on April 17, 1795, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 30, doc. 11.
150. Francisco owed money to several Rio merchants: 900,000 réis to Manoel José de Mesquita, 360,000 réis to Antonio Pedro de Morais and 100,000 réis to Antonio Francisco da Silva Guimarães. See 'Testamento de José Francisco' on May 28, 1800, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 15, doc. 6.
151. 'Carta Patente' on December 27, 1787, AHU, Angola, cx. 74, doc. 2.
152. With the exception of the first debt just noted, which were to be paid with the proceeds of ten slaves sent to Brazil, all other payments were to be in cash. See 'Testamento de António José de Barros' on September 10, 1799, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 2, doc. 3 A.
153. 'Testamento de António José de Barros' on September 10, 1799, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 2, doc. 3 A, fls. 13-14.

154. 'Testamento de António José de Barros' on September 10, 1799, ANTT, FF, JU, África, maço 2, doc. 3 A, fl. 15. Manoel Gonçalves Moledo was one of the chief merchants in Rio in the late eighteenth century. See XXXX.
155. Although the ship bringing Barros back to Benguela was reputed to be one of the best sailing between Benguela and Rio de Janeiro, it was lost before it arrived back to Benguela. See 'Ofício do Governador de Benguela' on March 5, 1798, AHNA, cód. 442, fls. 55v.-56 and AHNA, cód. 256; 'Carta do Governador de Angola' on May 10, 1798, AHNA, cód. 247, fls. 12-14.

5

THE RETURNEES OF BENIN, TOGO, NIGERIA AND GHANA

Agudas and Tabom[1]

MILTON GURAN[2]

The object of this work is to analyse the return to Africa of slaves freed in Brazil; more specifically, the construction of new identities based on the memory of the period during which they lived in Brazil. This new identity enabled these freed slaves to overcome the stigma of slavery and reintegrate themselves into the society that had excluded them. These social groups are known as the Aguda in Benin, Togo and Nigeria; and as the Tabom in Ghana.

This theme, in the case of the Aguda[3] – or *brésiliens*, as those who identify themselves in terms of a Brazilian cultural matrix are called, as we shall explain below – has been treated by various authors, including Pierre Verger, Michel Turner, Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, Alberto da Costa e Silva and, more recently, by Robin Law, to name only those who have studied the subject in greater depth. In relation to the lesser known Tabom there is Alcione Amós' pioneering study, as well as the book by Marco Antonio Shalmloeffel, a former Brazilian in Accra.[4]

When considering the reflux of the slave trade – to use the expression coined by Pierre Verger – we always think of the Slave Coast as the destination of freed slaves from Salvador. However, there was also a significant number of departures from Rio de Janeiro to Angola during the nineteenth century.[5] The flow of returnees, at least in the case of departures from Salvador, increased substantially after 1835, with the deportation of large numbers of slaves who had taken part in the Malês Revolt, a famous uprising in Bahia described by historian João José Reis.[6] These deportees, Muslims or sympathizers of Islam, were well received abroad, which encouraged other freed African slaves, who were mostly Catholic, to come over and settle in the region covering present-day Benin, Togo and Nigeria, and further along the coast in Ghana.

They were part of the elite of enslaved Africans in Brazil, those who had been strong enough to survive the conditions of slavery and had the necessary skills to acquire their freedom. They were well-trained professionals; managers with thorough knowledge of work on big plantations; tailors; carpenters; master-builders. All spoke fluent Portuguese and were often literate. However, they bore the marks of their slave past (Meillassoux, 1986).

There were Brazilian merchants, known as *agudas,* engaged in the slave trade, who were already resident on Africa's west coast. The word *agudas* is derived from São João da Ajuda, the name of the Portuguese fort in the city of Whydah, present-day Benin. It was by allying themselves with these slave traders and using the new culture acquired in Brazil that the returnees forged a new social identity, thus overcoming the stigma of slavery.

The south of present-day Benin, where the slave trade was intense until the middle of the nineteenth century, was also the main destination of the returnees, whether Muslim, as shown by Porto Novo's Great Mosque, or catholic. These returnees allied themselves with the former slave traders, constituting a Westernized elite that dominated Benin's economic life until the establishment of the French colonial administration.

Whereas the return to Benin was spontaneous, undertaken for affective or commercial reasons, there was, in the case of Nigeria, a greater degree of planning on the part of the British colonial administration, who wanted to use the agudas to drive the colony's economy. For this purpose, they even freighted ships and paid the passage of large numbers of families. The nineteenth century saw the development of a community of Brazilian returnees in Lagos, that rivaled in number and achievements the one established in Porto Novo.

The saga of the Tabom community in Accra had created a different process, the specific characteristics of which will be analyzed in the second part of this text. First of all, let us examine the most emblematic case of identity construction based on the period lived in Brazil, represented by the agudas, whose epicentre was the region of present-day Benin.

AGUDAS

The agudas have various origins and are currently found in all social classes. They are mostly Catholic or Muslim. The largest group is composed of descendents of former slaves who, besides the cultural patrimony, brought the surnames acquired there, usually from their owners. These freed-slave returnees had different origins and developed a social organization based on their experience of life in Brazil, in order to assimilate with the

Brazilians already established in the region to promote the slave trade. This group was joined by the descendents of Africans who had been slaves of the slave traders, or the former slave returnees. The former adopted the surnames of their owners, as the latter had done with their Brazilian masters. Among nineteenth century agudas, one can also find some descendents of Frenchmen or Spaniards, who were co-opted by the social dynamic of the Brazilian culture that was dominant at that time.

Amongst the most notable aspects of the agudas' cultural contribution we may cite: the mononuclear patriarchal family and the use of the surname; Catholicism and religious feasts, such as those celebrating Nosso Senhor do Bonfim and São Cosme and São Damião; new agricultural techniques and new dietary habits, such as the use of manioc, the "feijoada" (a Brazilian bean stew), coconut candy, etc.; the use of cutlery and other utensils of domestic life; a new style of architecture and occupation of domestic space; building techniques, carpentry and joinery, etc.

The Portuguese language was so widely disseminated throughout the Coast that the Catholic Mission of Lyon, the first French mission to establish itself in Benin – in Uidá in 1862 – taught Portuguese.[7] Teaching in Portuguese was abolished soon afterwards by the direct French administration, but many Portuguese words nevertheless permanently entered regional languages.

Unfortunately, one cannot establish an exact number, but it is estimated that they represent no less than 5 per cent of the country's total population, evidently including married women, and their children who lost their maiden names when they married, .

BRAZILIAN CULTURE'S ROLE IN THE SOCIAL INSERTION OF FORMER SLAVES WHO RETURNED TO AFRICA FROM BRAZIL

When arriving in Africa, the ex-slave returnee from Brazil, though still an African, was no longer that particular individual, son of so-and-so, married to so-and-so, native of a specific village and subject of that particular king. Indeed, all his family and social links had been severed by slavery, which made him, on his return, a kind of *generic African* – to use Darcy Ribeiro's (1995:318) concept regarding detribalized Indians in Brazil. Another important aspect to be considered is that he usually returned to the port from which he had been shipped to Brazil and ended up staying there, given that his village or social milieu of origin had changed completely, if not totally disappeared.

There is also the fairly large number of cases of those who had been sold by their own families or rival political factions. This in itself constituted

a strong reason for the returnee African not to want, or be able, to resettle in his native village. As Kátia M. de Queiroz (1979:30) explains:

> it was usual to get rid of the village's most problematic people, those that broke the community's laws by stealing or committing adultery; it was also common to sell children who were regarded as useless mouths, difficult to feed in periods of crisis, or indebted people, or those who had been defeated in war and the children of mothers other than the heir's, on the death of the father king.

The most famous example of this practice is that of the mother of king Guêzo of Dahomey, sold by Adandozan (Verger, 1953b and Hazoumé, 1937:31). In the course of my research, I encountered similar cases. All lived with forbearance, but always referred to it with considerable reserve and indignation.

These individuals, whether sold or donated, had left as slaves and had thus been excluded from the societies to which they were returning. On their return, they were different from the others, spoke a foreign language, dressed differently, ate using cutlery and declared themselves Catholics or Muslims. Joiners, carpenters, tailors, stone-masons and foremen, merchants in the capitalist sense of the term, most of them literate, regarded themselves as being on the side of progress and modernity in contrast to a society they considered to be primitive and savage. This society, however, still viewed them as slaves, notwithstanding their 'White man's ways'.

The construction of ethnic identity is based on difference (Barth, 1995), that is, in relation to the Other. Identity construction thus uses a strategy that values differences and, from this perspective, the situation is quite clear: for the former slave returnees the natives were savages and they, in turn, were always seen by the latter as slaves that imitated the 'White man's ways'. As a group, the only thing they had in common was the fact that they had been slaves in Brazil, spoke Portuguese, had 'White man's ways' and declared themselves Catholic. So it was with the Whites – in this case the Brazilians who had long been established on the Coast – that they were to identify and establish alliances.

It was precisely the experience of life acquired in Brazil that enabled them to insert themselves in the economy on the side of those who gave the orders, and not merely as a workforce. At a time when the conflict between traditional culture and capitalism was becoming more accentuated, they

had the skills needed to assume the role of masters and drive the economy alongside the Brazilian merchants and slave traders. The latter received them very well and used them to develop their business. The alliance between these two groups – one composed of the Brazilian or Portuguese merchants and slave traders, and the other by former slave returnees – defined the profile of the aguda community as it is today. In it, one may find both the arrogance of the slave masters – what most of them had become since their return to Africa – and the slave habits acquired in Brazil.

One of the most important aspects to emerge from the study of this social group is, without doubt, the exemplary way in which these former slaves managed to insert themselves in the very society that had excluded them. They were most certainly freed slaves in Brazil, but not in Africa, where most of the population looked on them as slaves. But it was precisely in their experience of slavery in Brazil, that they sought the raw material to construct a new collective identity that enabled them to have a social and economic function as *full citizens* in the same society that had rejected them.

Origins, religion and language are generally considered to be the main supporting factors for the constitution of an ethnic group. Indeed, in order to be able to insert themselves in local society – given their diverse ethnic origins – the ex-slaves valorized their 'stay' in Brazil, as their only common element. It was as if slavery were taken as the starting point for a new life, as if it were mythically chosen as a new common origin. Thus, it is exactly the culture acquired in Brazil that commanded the process. The Portuguese language and the Catholic religion were used to compose a new collective identity, which was in fact the identity of the Brazilians who were already established in the region.

Hence, to be an aguda today in Benin is to share a common memory relating to a set of achievements, and to a 'Brazilian' way of being. To better understand this situation, we may divide the social identity construction process into three consecutive periods.

The first period began at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the presence of Brazilian slave traders on the Coast started to increase. The slave trade was then being combated by the British, and the Bahians were doing everything in their power to prolong its existence. These slave traders and merchants were White men who had their own way of life and married native women. They maintained commercial and political relations with the natives who were, in a certain way, assimilated through marriage. They were not very numerous, despite their great economic and political importance, but they made fortunes and lived according to their own culture.

The second period began with the massive arrival of former slaves from 1835 onwards. They were Negroes, but had 'White man's manners'. They discriminated against the Africans, regarding them as 'savages', and were in turn rejected by the latter, who still regarded them as 'slaves' – that is, excluded . All the 'Brazilians' I interviewed in the course of my research affirmed that they had been called 'slaves' in various quotidian situations. It is practically the rule at school and in the market. In the domain of private life, by contrast, explains the historian François de Medeiros, 'there is a tacit agreement never to talk about one's slave origins'. [8]

These freed slaves associated themselves with the first agudas, initially in the slave trade and later in the most varied kinds of local and international trade, as well as the production and exploitation of local resources, such as palm oil.

The agudas – already composed, at that time, of the descendents of slave traders, returnee slaves, their descendents and their slaves – were the instigators of practically all modern economic activity and the penetration of Western culture in the region.

On closer examination, the aguda culture of this second period is different from that of the first Brazilians. It is different in itself but, more importantly, it is its social function that changes. The Bahian slave traders were White, thus naturally different from the natives, so that they had their own place in native society. This place was assured by their economic alliance with the king of Dahomey, and expressed symbolically by the role of Francisco Félix de Souza, the first Chachá, and other Brazilian '*cabeceiras*' in the prevailing power structure.

The freed-slave returnees became agudas, but not exactly like the others. It is true that they modelled themselves after their masters and had roughly assimilated their culture, which was fairly similar to that of the first agudas, but they had also brought to Africa a certain culture developed in Brazil by poorer people and the slaves themselves. It was for this reason that, besides the architecture and representation of self, the more visible indicators of 'Brazilian' identity originate in practices that are more linked to the slaves than to their masters in Brazil. This is the case of the 'feijoada' (originally a slave-house dish, before becoming a Brazilian national dish), the feast of Nosso Senhor do Bonfim (initially a feast of Africans and criollos from Bahia, before becoming the object of a whole people's devotion) and the 'burrinha frolic' (a popular folkloric feast that was never really practiced by the elite). Aguda culture, initially a European-style culture, was gradually enriched by aspects of a truly Brazilian culture, similar to the way it was developing in Brazil itself.

The French colonial presence, which imposed 'White man's ways' on the whole country, provided support, after a fashion, for the cultural choice of this mass of *generic African* returnees from Brazil. Those who had departed as slaves came back as masters, that is, as bearers of a culture that was imposing itself on the country. It is at this time that the opposition between notions of 'civilization/modernity' and 'primitivism/savagery' was acquiring new contours in the process of insertion of the former slaves into local society.

Thus, we arrive at the third period that is important for an understanding of aguda identity in present-day Benin. Today, *the memory of the time lived* in Brazil has given way to *the memory of achievements* in Benin. Just as the function of the first *memory* was to enable these returnee slaves to insert themselves into local society, the second also had a precise social function. It is based on the memory of their achievements that the 'Brazilians' defend the legitimacy of their place in present-day Benin society.

Relations between the agudas and the French administration took various forms. The 'Brazilians' were initially allies of the French, who used them as intermediaries in their relations with the natives. However, with the consolidation of French power, the 'Brazilians' were progressively excluded from the more profitable economic activities. This occurred, first of all, in the case of the wholesale sector, followed soon after by the retail trade, with both increasingly monopolized French firms. Even the most solid aguda merchants were thus driven into bankruptcy.

The social and political influence of the 'Brazilians' really went into decline from 1946 onwards, when Benin's political and economic life changed radically due to the establishment of a new system of political representation in the Territorial Assembly, and in the French National Assembly. It is at this time, as explained by the Benin historian,[9] that 'the "Brazilians" and mestizos in general, regarded as assimilated with the colonial administration, are dislodged from power'. This trend deepened further at independence when the agudas were then classified together with the French as colonizers. Later on, during General Kérekou's Marxist regime, notwithstanding the participation of some personalities in the regime, they were regarded as members of the bourgeoisie.

The analysis of the Benin agudas' ethnic identity construction process enables us to understand how they inscribed themselves among the main actors of the transition from traditional societies to the constitution of a 'modern' state. In my opinion, it is from this perspective that we should assess the size of their contribution to the cultural, economic and social domain.

The main aspect one should highlight is that the bricolage of a new ethnic identity enabled the former slave returnees to insert themselves as *fully-fledged citizens*. In fact, this insertion was possible, on the one hand, because society as a whole was undergoing a process of transition towards the culture they had brought with them and, on the other, because the admission of these excluded people was absolutely necessary to make this transition possible and more effective. The agudas were initially the intermediaries between traditional societies and Western culture, and then took on the role of interpreters of the natives in their relations with the colonial power, and vice-versa. Mixed and imbricated with traditional societies through marriage, always straddling various cultures, they have also played the role of intermediaries inside different native ethnic groups, always inscribing themselves as one of the main actors of the construction process of modern Benin.

Nevertheless, a different record from the return of freed slaves to Africa, during the nineteenth century can be found in the memory built by another community of returnees: the Tabom people.

THE SAGA OF THE ACCRA TABOM

The oral tradition depicts two paths in the saga of the Tabom's return to Africa. One of them defends the view that the first freed slaves to arrive in Ghana came straight from Nigeria in one group, arriving here on 8 August 1836. However, others argue that three waves of freed slaves were joined in the formation of the Tabom people. This is corroborated by the most recent studies.

The first group, composed of seven families from Bahia, landed in 1829. They were led by Kangidi Asuman, who would later change his name to Azumah Nelson. In 1836, two other groups arrived, one with around two hundred people directly from Bahia, and the other, under the leadership of Mahama Sokoto, supposedly came via Nigeria. These were men and women returning to their ancestral home, after working very hard in Brazil, and were determined to rebuild their lives in freedom. They mastered handicraft techniques, mainly goldsmithery. They were the first tailors and architects of this region and, as experienced farmers, had a perfect mastery of efficient, although rudimentary, irrigation techniques.

They were highly regarded by the Ga chiefs, and the Mantse Nii Ankrah gave them a good reception, providing them with a place in his territory: the Otublohum region. At that time, the city of Accra was divided into three areas under the authority of the English, Dutch and Danes. The Otublohum region was under the authority of the Danes at Christianborg

Castle, who did not like Nii Ankra's decision, but were obliged to agree to it. Having lived together for almost two centuries, the Tabom were completely integrated with the Ga people. Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, the Tabom Mantse Nii Azumah V placed himself under the protection of the Otublohum Mantse, Nii Dodoo Nsaki II.

According to the Tabom tradition, the first group of Brazilian returnees to arrive in Accra was composed of 75 people, belonging to seven families. They were residents of Bahia who had managed to purchase their freedom and decided to live in the land of their ancestors. These families were: Asuma Nelson, Mahama Nassu (or Nassau), Vialla (or Viala or Viara – probably a variation of the Brazilian patronym Vieira), Manuel Zuzer (probably a variation of the Brazilian patronym Souza, which is very common in West Africa) Gomez and Peregrino.

The Nelson family, who were the leaders of this group, left a deep mark on the Tabom by founding the First Scissors House in 1854, thus identifying the group with what was most modern at that time, namely Western-style clothing. This building was a great centre for training master tailors. It survived, always used by tailors, until last year when it was destroyed by fire. Its main director was George Aruna Nelson, the youngest son of Nii Asuma Nelson I and Teresa Iawo, who was born in 1832. He perfected his tailoring skills in Nigeria, probably with the agudas of the Brazilian Quarter. On a hand-painted sign in the First Scissors House one could read: '1st Scissors House, 1854. Ship', beside the incription 'S.S. Brazil. Capt. J. Teilo Nelson' (sic). The First Scissors House, together with the Brazil House constitute the most important places of memory of Accra's Tabom community.

Accra's Tabom community is organized around the Tabom Mantse, one of the chieftaincies linked to the Otublohum Mantse, who, in turn, is one of the seven chieftaincies under the authority of the Ga Mantse.

Traditionally, the Tabom chieftaincy is held by the Nelson family, in recognition of the leadership of Azumah Nelson, who led the group of Afro-Brazilians returning to Africa via Nigeria before settling in Ghana. The Tabom chief is chosen in a democratic fashion during a meeting of all the community's families.

Six mantses have occupied the Tabom Stool since the Tabom community consolidated their presence in Accra in 1836:

1. Nii Azumah I – 1836 to circa 1865
2. Nii Azumah II – circa 1865 to 1900

3. Nii Aruna I – circa 1900 to 1926
4. Nii Azumah III – 1936 to 1961
5. Nii Azumah IV – 1961 to 1981
6. Nii Azumah V – 1998 –

Nii Azumah I and Nii Azumah II were born in Brazil. The first was known as Azumah Nelson, having received his title posthumously. It was he who negotiated the settling of the Tabom in this area of Old Accra with the Otublohum Mantse, Nii ankrah, and with the Ga Mantse, Nii Takie Kome I.

Nii Azumah II, born in 1826, was Azuma Nelson's son and became known as Alasha Nelson, though he had been baptized as João Antônio Nelson. He was a close friend of Nii Takie Tawiah I, Paramount Chief of the Ga. Nii Azumah II consolidated the Taboms' integration into Ga society. His successor was Nii Aruna I, also a son of Arzumah Nelson, who was born in Accra in 1836. He founded the First Scissors House mentioned above.

Since arriving in Ghana, the Tabom have always placed a high value on education and this enabled them to play an outstanding role in Ghana's social, economic and political life during the course of the twentieth century.

When the Accra Metropolitan Assembly was created at the beginning of the twentieth century to administer Ghana's capital, Jones Nelson was elected as its first director general. A street in the district of Adabraka – the Jones Nelson Road – was named after him. Samuel Asuma Nelson, a cousin of his who was keenly involved in sport, was Vice-Minister of Sport and Youth between 1984 and 1991 and currently acts as adviser to the Tabom Mantse. Kankan Costa, a former student leader, was appointed as Vice-Minister of Defence in 1977.

Many also became distinguished lawyers and doctors, such as Henri Plange, who took his degree in law in 1902, and Dr Aruna Morton, who became the private physician of Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president. In the religious sphere, one should highlight George Aruna Kojo Nelson who was also chaplain of the Ghanaian army.

A special mention must be made of Samuel Azumah Nelson, also known as the *The Professor*. He made his début on the international boxing scene when he won the World Military Boxing Championship in the featherweight category, in 1978. He began his professional career in the following year, and in 1984, in the city of Puerto Rico, became world featherweight champion. He remained unbeaten until 1988, when he

switched to the lightweight category. He was world champion for more than 10 years in these categories, and retired in 1998 at the age of 40. Regarded by the international press as the best African boxer of all time, he is the country's most popular sportsman, and Accra's sports complex has been named after him.

In the institutional field, the third position in the State hierarchy is held by Georgina Theodora Wood, who is from a traditional Tabom family. In 2002, she was appointed to the Supreme Court by President John Kufuor, and has been Chief Justice since May 2007. She is the first woman in Ghana's history to head the Judiciary, and this makes her the highest ranking female in Ghana's political history.

The Tabom, though also using their Brazilian cultural matrix as an indicator of identity, have not followed the same strategy as the agudas of the Gulf of Benin, regarding their interaction with the surrounding society; perhaps because they have a smaller demographic weight and are inserted into a society that, during the course of recent history, has sought to valorize the specificities of African culture, and where social relations between groups are more stratified and organized, the fact is that, in practice, they have become an extension of the Ga people. This is well illustrated by the following images.

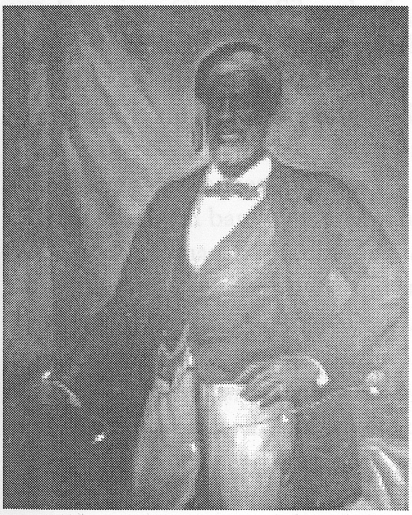
As is well known, the representation of self is one of the clearest aspects of the construction of a social identity.[10] As it has become an enduring process, we can follow its most visible traces up to the present day. The portraits of the founders and other ancestors of the aguda families of all origins, exhibited inside their houses in accordance with the country's customs, always present men dressed in a European way. The aim seems to be to show that they were already 'advanced' before French colonization had generalized 'White man's ways' among the majority of the population.

This strategy is well illustrated by the iconographic representation of the Chachá, the viceroy of Dahomey, blood brother of the king and the most important figure of the Slave Coast agudas. In this series of photographs, we can see the way this representation accompanied the strategy used to construct a difference in relation to traditional African culture, while at the same time identifying with European culture's advance in the region.

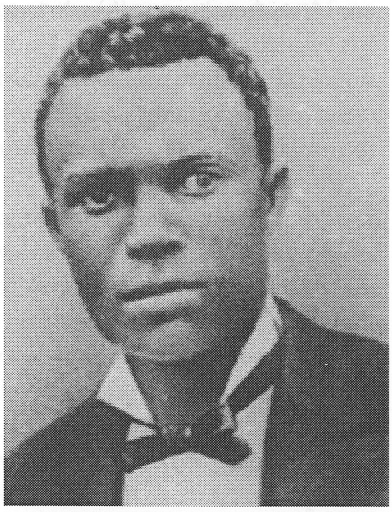
The Tabom's trajectory was strikingly different. When they arrived and began negotiations aimed at their definitive settlement in the country, they used to present themselves as bearers of European culture – as nineteenth century masters of Brazilian slaves – perfectly dressed as such, but they gradually adhered to local customs, constructing a new representation for themselves based on Ga culture.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Francisco Feliz de Souza, Chachá I, presented himself in a Western way, as an adventurer.

Chachá I's, eldest son, Chachá II, represented himself as a Bahian commendatory, a prosperous merchant or financier.



The uncertain times that followed seemed to have guided Chachá III, the latter's brother, in his proposal to merge the two models.



Chachá IV, in turn, definitely assumed the posture of a great lord of his times – cosmopolitan with worldly touches.

ENDNOTES

1. A first version of this paper, entitled 'From Africans in Brazil to Brazilians in Africa: the Agouda of Benin and the Tabon of Ghana – 19th and 20th centuries', was presented at the Seminar 'Le Brésil et l'Atlantique Sud XVIe – XXIe siècles: une histoire globale à l'époque moderne et contemporaine', organized by the 'Centre d'Etudes du Brésil et de l'Atlantique Sud' of the University of Paris IV – Sorbonne, April 10-11, 2008.
2. Anthropologist – Associate researcher – LABHOI (Oral History and Image Laboratory)/UFF – Universidade Federal Fluminense (Brazil).
3. Benin's social scientists use the term 'afro-brésiliens' to designate these aguda. However, I prefer to continue to use the term 'brésiliens', that is widely used in the literature and by the aguda themselves. Furthermore the adjective 'Afro-Brazilian' designates the members of the African Diaspora in Brazil.
4. Both published in 2007.
5. As shown by the historian Mônica Lima e Souza in her doctoral thesis, defended in 2008 at the Fluminense Federal University, in the State of Rio de Janeiro.
6. On this matter, see João José Reis, 2003.
7. Sinou (1995:110). See also Braga, J. S. (1970:93).
8. Interview with François de Medeiros, June 28 , 1996, in Paris.
9. Interview with K. E. Augustt, September 4, 1995, in Cotonu.
10. Vide Bourdieu, 1965 and Goffman, 1973.

6

THE HISTORY OF THE AFRO-BRAZILIAN COMMUNITY IN TOGO:

With Special Emphasis on the Olympio Family[1]

ALCIONE M. AMOS[2]

The Afro-Brazilian community in Togo can be characterized as being an outgrowth of the communities that had previously formed in Dahomey (today Benin) and Nigeria (mostly in Lagos). The Lomé branch of the Togolese Afro-Brazilian community, for instance, did not start to develop until the 1880s, and the Olympio family was premier among its members.[3]

Francisco Olympio Silva, the founder of the Olympio family in Africa, was reportedly born in Salvador, Bahia on 24 July 1833. His father was of Portuguese origin and his mother of African and Amerindian extraction, according to family traditions. Indeed, historians have mentioned the Asiatic features of members of the Olympio family in Togo, as confirmation of their Amerindian ancestry.[4]

He was born barely two years before the Malê revolt shook Salvador, Bahia on 25 January 1835. Consequently, his formative years were passed under the pall of persecutions and lack of economic opportunities. At the threshold of adulthood, Francisco, who had never been a slave, according to family traditions still preserved in Togo, arrived in Africa in 1850, at the age of 17. He came to Africa aboard one of the slave ships belonging to the rich and influential slave trading Cerqueira Lima family. A friend named João Gonçalves Baeta, who also would become the patriarch of an important Afro-Brazilian family on the West Coast of Africa, accompanied him. Olympio went first to Vodza, an old centre of slave trade near Keta, in the territory of what is today Ghana, where he joined an uncle, variously identified as Anjou or Cesar Cerqueira Lima, in his slave-trading business.[5]

For the next decade and a half, Francisco would ply the slave trade at various locations along the coast near Keta until he settled at Porto Seguro (today Agbodrafo), in the territory which is today Togo. There he established a trading house, while continuing his slave-trading activities. Father Francesco Borghero, a Catholic missionary from the *Société de missions africaines à Lyon*, visited Olympio's establishment at Porto Seguro in 1863. He commented that the location was perfect to serve as an embarkation point for slaves. In 1864, Olympio was still operating in Porto Seguro and he was included in a list of the few remaining slave traders of importance in the area. Within the next few years, a fire destroyed his family home and trading house. He moved shortly thereafter to Agoue (today in Benin.)[6]

By the time Francisco Olympio moved to Agoue, the town already boasted a large Afro-Brazilian community.[7] The first Brazilians had arrived around 1835 after the Malê revolt in Bahia. Under the leadership of Joaquim 'Zoki' d'Almeida, a Brazilian ex-slave, the town became a strong centre of Christianity. For several decades, Agoue's main business had been slave trading. Then British repression of the human trade, beginning in the 1850s, had nudged Afro-Brazilians to switch to legal commerce. Francisco Olympio, who had received a land grant from one of the indigenous leaders of Agoue, for services rendered to the community during its war with Petit-Popo (today Anecho, in Togo), established a trading house. From that time on, Agoue became the seat of the Olympio family in Africa.[8]

By the time Francisco established himself in Agoue, he had dropped the surname Silva, possibly because the name reminded him of his time as a disenfranchised, free, Black man in Brazil. Another version of the story was that he had to change his name because one of his slave ships had been caught by the British, and he was eluding capture. He also had wholeheartedly adopted the local custom of polygamy. He proceeded to build a large family, with seven women. Eventually, he fathered at least twenty-one children. The first was a girl named Agnes, born in the early 1850s. The last one was a boy named Francisqulhoun (the phonetic spelling of Francisquinho, which means Little Francisco in Portuguese), born in 1886. Most of his children had Brazilian names. One of his spouses, perhaps his main consort, was an Afro-Brazilian named Constância Talabi Pereira dos Santos. She was the daughter of Antonio Pereira dos Santos who had arrived in Agoue around 1836, and of Francisca Pereira dos Santos, one of the leaders of the Afro-Brazilian community in Agoue. Constância Talabi had eight children with Olympio, including one of his most successful sons: Octaviano.[9]

The Afro-Brazilians had built on the West Coast of Africa a community, which mirrored that of the White upper classes in Bahia, where they had

been slaves or disenfranchised freed slaves. They had large households where Portuguese was the main language, and where domestic slave servants were abundant. Their family houses *(maisons familiales)* were built in the Brazilian baroque architectural style, thanks to the many Afro-Brazilian artisans who had also migrated to Africa.

Francisco Olympio was no exception. Although the effective end of the slave trade in 1865 had heralded an era of diminished resources for the Afro-Brazilians, he successfully made the transition from slave-trader to planter and commercial trader. His plantations reportedly stood for miles along the beach in Agoue and Grand-Popo. Most likely, he began using the slaves, whom he otherwise would have exported to Brazil, as the labour force in his plantations. His trading business also developed steadily. In 1882, Olympio reportedly maintained considerable trade with Europe.[10] Francisco Olympio died in 1907 and was buried in the Agoue cemetery. His headstone was written in Portuguese, as befitted an Afro-Brazilian returnee. Its translation is as follows: 'In memory of the always missed and remembered Francisco Olympio. Born 24 July 1833; died 24 July 1907, 74 years old. His sons and daughters erected this headstone.'

Afro-Brazilians who returned to Africa gave considerable importance to the education of their children. The Olympio children were first educated locally, in the schools run by the Catholic priests, where Portuguese was the language of instruction. This was the case of Octaviano Olympio. He was born in Agoue on 27 September 1859, and received his primary education at the local Catholic school. He was then sent to Nigeria and later to London for five years, where he studied accounting and business. His brother, Epiphanio, was also sent to London to study.[11] Octaviano could speak at least five languages well: Portuguese, English, Ewe, Hausa and Yoruba. He later learned some French but, according to one of his sons, English was his primary language.[12]

Daughters, most likely were not as well educated as sons. But they also had an important role to play in the forging of this new society. They married men from other Afro-Brazilian families, thus strengthening the community's ties. Two of Francisco's daughters, Leontina and Delia, married Medeiros men. The Medeiros family was of Portuguese ancestry and became integrated into the Afro-Brazilian communities of Agoue and Ouidah (in today's Benin).[13] Another daughter of Francisco, Laurinda, married Alvez Amorin. After being widowed, she married a Medeiros. Francisco's daughter, Clara, married a member of the Soares family and another daughter, Josephina, married Gabriel Vianna.[14]

As they built their new society on the coast of Africa, Afro-Brazilians

did not lose sight of Brazil. As much as they traded with Europe, they also maintained a lucrative trade with Brazil. Some of them went back to see family and friends, others went to study, and still others eventually went back for good. This was the case with Julio, one of Francisco Olympio's sons, who was born in Africa in 1859. He went to Brazil to study and never returned to Africa.[15]

As a matter of fact, the memories of Brazil, the use of its language, and the celebration of its religious feasts remained a constant in the Afro-Brazilian community in the West African coast well into the twentieth century. In Togo the last celebration of the *Buriyan*, an Afro-Brazilian festival, was held in 1947. Portuguese was spoken in Togo until at least the middle of the twentieth century.[16] Words derived from Portuguese, primarily related to food, are still spoken in Togo today. Thus *Farofa* (which is the name of a Brazilian dish made with manioc flour) is the word used in Togo for the manioc flour itself. *Ferigna* (phonetic spelling of the word *farinha*, which means flour in Portuguese); *Kpono* (phonetic spelling of *pão*, the Portuguese word for bread) is the name for manioc flour bread in Togo; *Kusidu* (phonetic spelling of *cozido*) is a vegetable stew dish seasoned with several meats' F*echuada* (phonetic spelling of *feijoada*, the national dish of Brazil) is a stew made of black beans and also seasoned with several meats. These foods are still common fare in Togo.[17]

The new generations of Afro-Brazilians born and raised in Africa were steeped in a tradition of trading – first in slaves and later in goods – and, as we have seen, had knowledge of several European and local languages. It was natural that they were soon drawn into the role of agents for the various European trading companies established around the coast. At least three of Francisco Olympio's sons, Francisco (Chico) Jr., Cesar, and Octaviano, worked for the British trading house of A. and F. Swanzy. Another son, Epiphanio, worked for the trading house of Miller Brothers from Liverpool.[18]

In the early 1880s, a new trading centre began to develop on the West Coast of Africa, which would become very important for the Olympio family. The Europeans knew this small village on the West coast of Africa, as Bey Beach (or Be-Beach). But beginning in 1880 the area was settled by Anlo traders (coming from the Gold Coast) who took possession of land by the sea and built their trading houses. By 1881, European trading companies were also attracted to the area. In 1882, two of Francisco Olympio's children, Chico Olympio, born in 1854, and his brother Octaviano, then 22 years old, were commissioned by the British trading company A. and F. Swanzy (also commonly known as Swanzy Brothers) to open a branch at the location.[19]

The arrival of the Olympio brothers at Bey Beach (later known as Lomé) in 1882, would be the first chapter in the history of the family in the city. Chico Olympio died prematurely in 1886, but Octaviano would go on to become one of the most distinguished members of Lomé's commercial and political elite for six decades, under three colonial powers.

Being a shrewd businessman, Octaviano not only took care of Swanzy's business, but also immediately secured commercial property for the family's use. He acquired land on Market Street, behind the line of European trading houses facing the beach. His two older sisters, Clara and Julia, tended to the family business. In 1885, he also acquired land from indigenous chiefs, away from the centre towards the lagoon, as well as on the northwest side.[20]

By 1884, the Germans had signed a protection agreement with a local chief and had established a colony, which they called Togo. First the Germans installed their capital in Baguida, then they moved it to Anecho; and in 1897 they moved it to Lomé. Octaviano Olympio, fast becoming an important businessman, did not have trouble in coming to terms with the new colonial power. Above all, Afro-Brazilians on the West Coast of Africa had learned to be pragmatists who would deal with anybody, if it meant economic success.

Nevertheless, the Olympios were not the only Afro-Brazilians to take advantage of the booming trade in Lomé in the early 1880s. In 1884 Domingos de Freitas and a member of the Medeiros family were also trading in the city. The Germans soon employed other Afro-Brazilians in official positions. João (usually called Juan by the Germans) d'Almeida was hired as a customs agent in 1888. He also had a trading business in Lomé. Another member of the same family, Adolpho d'Almeida, worked as an interpreter. Members of the de Souza family, descendants of the famous Chacha de Souza, were also prominent as functionaries of the German colonial government. Ignacio de Souza worked as a customs inspector; Augustino de Souza, eventually known as the richest man in West Africa, worked as an interpreter for the Germans, and Felício Marcelino Kokou de Souza worked as a nurse at the German hospital.[21]

Afro-Brazilians had been well known throughout the coast for their ability as builders and craftsmen, and some of them came to ply their craft in Lomé. The Aguiar brothers, twins Cosme and Damião (Damiano) and Jacintho Ildefonso, were well-known as bricklayers and carpenters. By 1906, they were also well established as retailers of building materials. Jacintho da Silva, who was born in Brazil, built the first Catholic chapel in Lomé in 1892-93. José (known by the Germans as Josephu) Santana was also a well-known carpenter. Other Afro-Brazilians worked as clerks for the many

European trading houses operating in Lomé. Thus the names of Cosmos Reis, Augustin[o] Medeiros, Francisco Gregorio de Souza and B. M. Aguiar appeared in several German lists as clerks.[22]

Afro-Brazilians also began acquiring additional land in Lomé and other areas of Togo. Jacintho and his brother Damião acquired eleven plots of land in Lomé; Felício de Souza brought seven lots in Lomé, and some land in Baguida; and Domingos de Freitas had five plots in Lomé and also property in Baguida. Several members of the Olympio family: Julia, Clara, Sintimo and Fabriano, all children of Francisco Olympio, bought land in areas away from Lomé.[23]

Afro-Brazilian influence was also prominent within the religious arena in Togo. On 28 August 1892, Octaviano Olympio, by then the most prominent citizen of Lomé, welcomed the Catholic missionaries of the German Society of the Divine Word, also known as the Steyler Mission, because of their headquarters in Steyl, Netherlands. Olympio immediately requested that the priests open a school. A month later, the school was operating with 25 students. Although not recorded, it is possible that many of the students were Afro-Brazilian. The first Catholic mass was held in Lomé on 4 September 1892, and a 12-year-old Afro-Brazilian boy named Facundo Calencio Carvalho de Souza served at the mass. He was one of the first children to be taught by the Catholic missionaries in Anecho. José (known by the Germans as Joseph) Anthonio Kodjovia de Souza served as an interpreter for the priests.[24]

Despite the fact that most Afro-Brazilians were Catholic, one of the most prominent leaders of the Protestant Church in Togo was Afro-Brazilian. Robert Domingos Gonçalves Baeta, born on 7 July 1883 in Vodza (today's Ghana), the son of João Gonçalves Baeta, was trained in the so-called Ewe School at Westheim[25] in Germany, between 1897 and 1900, and was ordained in 1917. He was placed in charge of the Lomé school that served the congregation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (predecessor of the Ewe Church), when the last European pastor left in 1921. He was described as having drive and personality, and had the ability to deal with government officials, be they German, British, or French. He was another example of the famous Afro-Brazilian adaptability on the West Coast of Africa.[26]

Another member of the Baeta family, Robert's older sister Mercy, became the first indigenous female teacher working with the schools of the German Presbyterian Bremen Mission. Mercy was born in Grand-Popo on 7 July 1880, and was part of the first class of female students informally taught in Keta by the wife of a German missionary. She started working as a teacher at 14 years old, when the missionaries opened the first formal

school for girls in Keta. Mercy Baeta died in 1917 after a very productive career as a teacher.[27]

Another lesser known religious faction among the Afro-Brazilians in Togo were the *Nago*. These were Muslim Afro-Brazilians of Yoruba origin who came to Lomé via Nigeria and Benin (then known as Dahomey). The Geraldo, Santana, Pereira, Aguiar and Reis families of Lomé belonged to this group. The *Nago* were, in general, less affluent than the Christian Afro-Brazilians, and had great expertise in the construction trade. They played an important role in creating a style of architecture typical to Lomé, which was based on construction and decorative techniques imported from Brazil. The *Nago* builders, João dos Reis and Jacintho Ildefonso Aguiar, were responsible for the construction of many houses in Lomé during the early decades of the twentieth century.[28]

Many of the Afro-Brazilians in Togo, being part of the 'upper-crust' Europeanized local society, demonstrated interest in new technology such as photography. The Aguiar brothers, besides being talented craftsmen, owned a construction materials business, and produced postcards that became part of the historical iconography of Togo. Fabriano Francisco Olympio, son of Francisco and brother of Octaviano, was a trader and photographer in Lomé. He moved to German Cameroon at the beginning of the century, and then went back to Lomé where he died in 1910, after a long illness. Later, in the early 1920s, C.M. (most likely Christian Modesto) Santos also worked as photographer in Lomé. Perhaps as a corollary of this interest, movies were first brought into Lomé by an Afro-Brazilian, a member of the Geraldo family, in the late 1920s.[29]

While the Afro-Brazilian community in Togo was expanding, Octaviano was becoming, by far, the richest and most influential indigenous citizen in the city. One of the first economic investments he made was to establish a connection with the Hausa traders from Salaga, in what would become known as the Gold Coast. In 1887 Olympio influenced the new German Governor, Jesko von Puttkamer, to expand German colonial influence into the Kpalime area in order to protect the routes of the Hausa traders under his auspices in Lomé. He was called Tafianou (a corruption of Octaviano) by the Hausa.[30]

In the late 1880s, Olympio established Lomé's first coconut plantation on the lands he had acquired previously from one of the indigenous chiefs. The plantation had 13,000 coconut palms. When, in 1890, a fire destroyed many of the dwellings in the city, the German administrator proclaimed all land to the northwest to be government property, and established a coconut plantation there. Nevertheless, Olympio's previous claim was respected. He

was the first Togolese to export copra extracted from his coconuts. Copra was the dried kernel of the coconut from which oil was extracted to produce soap, candles and a cheap type of cooking fat called 'coconut lard,' products that were in high demand in Europe.[31]

During this period, Octaviano Olympio also established the first brickyard in Lomé. In an excellent early example of energy conservation, he used the residue from his coconut plantation to fire the bricks. In 1892, around the time he left their employment, Octaviano Olympio obtained a line of credit from Swanzy Brothers, most likely to expand his trading business on Market Street. By 1903, Olympio had added cattle raising to his economic activities and had a herd of 150 head. Again, demonstrating his capacity to take advantage of natural resources to develop his businesses, Olympio put his cattle to graze among the coconut palm trees in his plantation. Thus, he was able to fertilize the trees free of charge, and feed his cattle without much effort or expense.[32]

Olympio's investments were not restricted to the territory of Togo. In 1900, he joined his brothers, Epiphanio and Cesar and nephew João Jeronimo Amorin, in establishing coconut plantations on the coast near Agoue, which by then was already under French colonial control. One measure of Octaviano's immense economic success was the fact that he more than doubled his income from 9,842 Marks in 1909 to 21,000 Marks in 1913. Only Togo's German governor, with a salary of about 30,000 Marks, made more money than Octaviano did. He seemed to have invested most of his wealth in real estate. By 1914, his land holdings in cities throughout Togo were valued at 750,000 to 1,000,000 Marks. This diversity of economic activities would serve him well in the future.[33]

At the same time that Octaviano Olympio was diversifying and building an enviable economic situation, other Afro-Brazilian traders were collapsing under the harsh economic conditions created by the Germans. They had no interest in encouraging Black entrepreneurs, and provided no credit or other assistance to the local traders. The introduction of high import-export license fees strangled the local merchants. One example of the economic distress affecting Afro-Brazilians was the commercial firm owned by the d'Almeida Brothers, João and Francisco. Located in Anecho, the company had employed seven clerks and 16 workers in 1899, but by 1908, it had succumbed to economic hardship and had liquidated its assets.[34]

German laws were also harsh in dealing with any perceived transgressions. Physical punishment was constantly applied. In fact, Acting Commissioner Markus Graf von Pfeil even flogged Octaviano Olympio, who was such a prominent citizen, in 1891, for insolent behavior in a dispute over a

horse. In 1898, Olympio and two other Afro-Brazilian traders were fined for offenses against German tax and trade ordinances. The next year, Olympio was again fined, this time because of an inconsiderate remark against the German colonial government. These conditions led to the formation of an indigenous movement, which sought redress from the colonial power. These were, in fact, the first stirrings of Togolese anti-colonialism and nationalism, which were decades ahead of the wave that would sweep Africa after the Second World War. Octaviano Olympio would be prominent in this movement.[35]

The first action in this nationalist movement was a petition dated 24 May 1909, and signed by Octaviano Olympio and Andreas Aku, a teacher and future pastor as well as leader of the Presbyterian Ewe Church. It was presented to the German governor, Count Julius Graf von Zech. Its main thrust was to request equal treatment under the law for the indigenous population; prevention of immediate arrest of natives in civil court cases; and that property be allowed as bond in court cases, instead of cash.

In his report to the Reich Colonial Office concerning the petition, Governor von Zech considered it to be revolutionary but asserted that he believed that the two signatories were, nevertheless, loyal German subjects. His answer to the petitioners, a very long letter in German, addressed to Octaviano Olympio, was based on the basic racist view that Whites were inherently superior to Blacks, and therefore had to be treated differently. He also believed that since that the White race was superior, offenses against Whites had to be judged more severely than those offenses against the Black (and inferior) race. The governor also stated that the most intelligent petitioners should be able to recognize, upon consideration, that their desire for equality under the law was not justified.[36]

Four years later, the indigenous leadership of Lomé drew up another petition. Robert Baeta, who because of his education in Germany was fluent in the language, wrote this one in German. It was more detailed and amplified the demands for justice presented in the 1909 petition. Dated 12 October 1913, it was signed by several prominent Togolese, with Octaviano Olympio's signature at the top. It presented seven requests: better organization of the justice system in Togo; elimination of chaining and flogging; better prison regulations; inclusion of indigenous representatives in the government Council meetings; introduction of a general national civil code; tax reductions; and permission for free trade for native traders.

The opportunity to deliver the new petition to the Germans was presented by the official visit of Dr Wilhelm Solf, the German Secretary of State for the Colonies, to Lomé in October of 1913. Although the German

Governor, Duke Adolf-Frederich von Mecklenburg, tried to thwart them, a group of Lomé notables, under the leadership of Octaviano Olympio, rushed Solf as he attempted to enter a car at the Governor's palace to tour the city. The German governor eventually accepted the petition. The local colonial government chose to respond to the petition by arresting eighteen indigenous traders, among them three Afro-Brazilians: Octaviano Olympio, A. Almeida and Victorino Pinto da Silveira.[37]

All this restlessness eventually led the Germans to believe that they should, after all, offer a certain level of representation to the local population. In December of 1912, Octaviano Olympio had already been approached with an offer to become a 'traditional chief.' He accepted the offer, but the matter was dropped when one of Lomé's indigenous chiefs, James Kwamina Bruce, challenged Octaviano's qualifications to be a 'traditional chief'. Finally, in April of 1914, Governor von Mecklenburg appointed Pastor Andreas Aku and Octaviano Olympio as representatives of the local population in Lomé.[38]

The appointment was to be short lived. The First World War exploded in early August 1914, and German Togo capitulated to the allies on 26 August. The Germans had retreated from Lomé earlier (7 August) and the city was then occupied by the British. They were received as friends, not as conquerors. Togo's territory was eventually partitioned between the French and the British, and Lomé was located in the British zone.[39]

During the six years the British were in Togo, they instituted favourable economic measures, such as the suspension of all direct taxes and trading license fees. The Bank of West Africa installed an agency in Lomé, and began to offer loans to the local traders, taking as collateral the products exported to England. Furthermore, the British discontinued the hated practices of physical punishment and chaining of prisoners. The British occupation, by removing economic obstacles to trade and providing a less restrictive environment, allowed the Lomé elite, including the Afro-Brazilians among them, to regain their influence and status, which had been curtailed under the Germans.[40]

Consequently, it was not surprising that at the end of the war in 1918, when the allies began to decide what to do with Togo, the Afro-Brazilians of Lomé were intent on having the British as their new colonial power. When Octaviano Olympio and Augustino de Souza were informed of the possible return of Togo to Germany, they were quick to state their concern. Olympio declared that if the Germans returned, he believed, that most of the entrepreneurial class in Lomé would leave. Souza declared that he had been employed by a German businessman under German occupation. Now

he had his own business and he did not want to reconcile with the Germans. One of the reasons Augustino was so concerned was undoubtedly because he had acquired the coconut plantation owned by the German firm, Wallbrecht, and he certainly would have lost it if the Germans had returned.[41]

It might be interesting to note here that some Togolese wanted the Germans to return. The *Bund der Deutschen Togolander* (German Togo Alliance) was formed in Accra, in September 1924. One of its aims was that Togo be unified, instead of divided between France and England, under a League of Nations Mandate given to Germany. The *Togo Bund,* as the organization was named for short, also sent petitions to the League of Nations in 1929 requesting the return of Germany. Most of the *Bund*'s members were former employees of German companies, teachers at the German schools, and interpreters for the German colonial government who found themselves unemployed after the sudden departure of the Germans in 1914.[42]

This nostalgia for Germany as a colonial master is interesting, considering the harshness and general contemptuous treatment the Togolese received under the Germans. One such example happened during the 25th anniversary celebration of German colonization in Togo on 5 July 1909. The official reception at Governor von Zech's palace was segregated. Europeans were received in the formal reception room in the second floor, and Africans stayed below.[43]

In an attempt to influence the decisions on Togo's future, Octaviano Olympio sent a steady stream of telegrams and petitions to the British Foreign Office, British newspapers, and the League of Nations requesting that Togo remain under the British. Olympio, who was then heading the Committee on Behalf of Togoland Natives, was very well informed on the discussions going on at the time. In a telegram dated 12 September 1919, he mentioned the so-called fourteen points tabled by President Woodrow Wilson. These were part of Wilson's State of the Union address to a joint session of the American Congress on 8 January 1918, stating the peace terms that the United States would accept.

Wilson asserted in his speech that 'The day of conquest and aggrandizement is gone...', and that 'A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.'

Olympio interpreted Wilson's anti-imperialistic statements to mean that the opinions of the colonized peoples of Africa, and their future, should be heard. He also had enough political savvy to attempt to use this knowledge

to influence decisions about the future of Togo, which were taking place in Europe.[44]

Despite the petitions and Wilson's anti-imperialistic views, after the signing of the Versailles treaty in 1919, most of Togo was put under French control, while a small part was annexed to the British colony of the Gold Coast. On 30 September 1920, the French arrived in Lomé to take over as the new colonial power. The next day, Octaviano Olympio, displaying the famous pragmatism common to all Afro-Brazilians on the West Coast of Africa, delivered the welcome speech. Nevertheless his attitude towards the French was considered to be extremely cold. His allegiance was eventually won over by Governor Auguste François Bonnecarrère, who arrived in Togo, in 1922.[45] By then, Olympio was already respected by the French as the most important indigenous leader in Togo, not only because of his considerable fortune, but also for the influence he exerted on the indigenous population, and the *éléments évolués* (the terms used by the French to identify the part of the indigenous population that they considered developed enough.) He started studying French at the age of 61 and was eventually able to understand it well.

He also demonstrated his support for the French cause, in 1938, by donating 10,000 Francs for the construction of a monument in honor of Georges Clemenceau, the French prime-minister during the First World War. Olympio's was the largest donation made by a Togolese. Augustino de Souza and Felício de Souza donated 5,000 Francs each.

In 1922, Bonnecarrèrre installed the *Conseil des Notables* (Council of Notable Citizens) in Lomé. This was a consultative body, composed of the most important citizens in the city, which advised the French on matters such as taxation, public works and the budget. Octaviano Olympio was a member of the first *Conseil* along with eleven other notables, four of them Afro-Brazilians, Felício de Souza, Augustino de Souza, Pastor Robert Baeta, and Henri Mensah de Souza. In 1924, Octaviano Olympio sealed his allegiance to France by travelling to Paris, after going to London to visit the colonial exposition.[46]

The French were also interested in training workers to staff the colonial apparatus (railroads, post-office, health services, etc). They immediately set up elementary schools throughout Togo. The school in Lomé had 500 students in 1921, and 610 the next year. In 1922, in order to further the educational development of the population, the French installed an *école primaire supérieur* (advanced elementary school) in Lomé. To be admitted to this school, the candidates had to pass a test. After completing a three year course, the students were candidates for further studies at prestigious

schools, run by the government of the French West African Federation (AOF) in Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Mali.[47]

Some members of the Afro-Brazilian communities in Anecho and Lomé sent their children to the French school, although in general, the great 'notables' did not do so. Thus we find that the brothers Gratien and Victor d'Almeida from Anecho were in the first group that graduated in 1923. Gratien also had the honour of graduating in first place. The d'Almeida brothers would become important members of the banking community in Togo. Also in that first group was Christophe Diogo who, by his last name, might also have been Afro-Brazilian. Anani Ignácio Santos, who graduated in 1927, was also from Anecho. He also graduated in first place. He went on to get a law degree in France, after receiving one of the first scholarships given to a Togolese. Later, he played an important role in Togolese politics.[48]

A total of 40 Afro-Brazilian students graduated from Lomé's advanced primary school, and from its successor *Collège Moderne de Lomé* (Modern College of Lomé), between 1923 and 1948; of these five were women. The families represented were Aguiar, Amorin, Baeta, d'Almeida, Diogo, Freitas, Geraldo, Gomez, Gonçalves, Lourenço (spelled as Laurenzo), Medeiros, Moreira, Olympio, Paraizo, Pereira, Reis, Santos, Soares and Souza.[49]

By 1920 Octaviano Olympio was at the pinnacle of his life. He was in his early sixties and had been able to acquire remarkable wealth. He was finally acknowledged as a leader by the colonial power and would be given due responsibility. He would serve in the Lomé *Conseil des Notables* from its inception in 1922 until 1935. He would also be invited to serve, along with Pastor Robert Baeta, in the *Conseil d'administration du Territoire* (Council for the Administration of the Territory.) In time, he would be duly honoured for his achievements. The French would bestow on him several decorations including: *Chevalier du Mérite agricole* (Knight of Agricultural Merit) in 1925, *Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur* (Knight of the Legion of Honour) in 1927, and *Officier du Mérite agricole* (Officer of Agricultural Merit) in 1931.[50]

Octaviano Olympio had also proved to be as prolific a father as his own had been. Along the way, as he built his fortune and acquired his position of leadership, he also had 24 children with six women. His primary wife was Maria Vicentia (Vicencia), with whom he renewed baptismal vows in the Catholic Church in 1895.[51] Some of his children would rise to prominence. His oldest son, Agostinho, would be an important planter in neighbouring Dahomey and would be elected *Chef de Canton* (District Chief)[52] for Agoue in 1937. Another son, Pedro, would be the first Togolese medical doctor trained in Europe. Olympio's youngest son, Luciano (Lucien Bebi), born

in 1931, when his father was already 72 years old, was trained as a lawyer in France and became Attorney General of the Togolese Supreme Court.[53]

Octaviano Olympio continued to wield considerable economic and political power until his death in 1940, at the age of 81. Besides being a member of the *Conseil des notables* and the *Conseil d'administration,* he would also become a member of the Chamber of Commerce, and of various commissions studying such varied issues as what constituted Togolese citizenship and indigenous customs.[54]

Over the quarter of a century that the *Conseil des notables* was in existence, at least eight Afro-Brazilians served in its ranks. Besides the five members of the original Conseil, we have found mention of Jacintho Aguiar, Modesto dos Santos, and M. Medeiros. Anecho, the other stronghold of Afro-Brazilians in Togo, had at least seven representatives of the community as members of its Conseil. They were Amah d'Almeida, Jorge d'Almeida, and Ildelfonso d'Almeida, Akuete da Silveira, Kuakuvi da Silveira, Cosmos da Silveira and Antonio de Souza. All of them were probably descendants of prominent Afro-Brazilian men of an earlier generation, such as the *Chacha* Francisco Félix de Souza, Pedro Codgio da Silveira and Joaquim 'Zoki' d'Almeida.[55]

Nonetheless, participation at the highest level of local political representation did not mean that the Afro-Brazilian community was cohesive in its view of political matters. This was clearly demonstrated when an uprising convulsed Lomé in 1933. This uprising, directly connected with the 1929 world economic crisis, which had caused a collapse in the trade of the country's main export products, was triggered by the untimely move of the colonial authorities imposing new taxes on the population. These taxes became especially onerous on the market-women of Lomé who had, for the first time, to pay a head tax in addition to the customary trade license.

The economic depression had caused the indigenous population to convey a lack of confidence in the elite representing them. The *Conseil des notables* was derisively called 'not able' (a pun with the French word *notable)* and considered by the general population to be too conciliatory with the colonial power.[56]

Since 1925, the *Conseil* had been elected by the *Chefs de quartier* (Chiefs of Neighbourhoods) and the *Chefs de famille* (Heads of Families) of Lomé. During the economic crisis, some members of this electoral college had formed *L'union cooperative des chefs de famille de Lomé* (Cooperative Union of the Heads of Families of Lomé) or, as they were popularly known, *Les Duawo.*[57] The members of the group presented themselves as speakers for the indigenous population, and proposed to serve as intermediaries between them and the *Conseil.*[58]

For the French, the *Duawo* were simply a secret society and consequently an illegal organization. When the authorities jailed the leaders of the organization in January of 1933, a riot ensued during which Octaviano Olympio's life was threatened and the house of the secretary of the *Conseil des notables*, Jonathon Savi de Tové, was ransacked and his car burned. The subsequent jailing and trial of the members of the society showed that at least two of the men in the directing committee of the *Duwao* were Afro-Brazilians. They were Innocencio d'Almeida and Antonio de Freitas. Koffi Geraldo, another Afro-Brazilian, was found to be a member of the organization.[59]

Besides participating in politics, Afro-Brazilians in Togo were also involved in its nascent press. Several newspapers, which appeared during the early French colonization period and later during the struggle for independence, had Afro-Brazilians as managers, directors or contributors. One name in particular seems to demand mention. Antonio Pedro d'Almeida was invited by the *Duawo* to write a letter and as a result, the French incarcerated the movement's leaders, causing the riot of January 1933. His role in the movement was never detected and he went on to establish a newspaper, *Le Cri du Togo* (Togo's Cry), to give a voice to the people's grievances. He was jailed by the French, because of the tenor of his articles, under the accusation of inciting riots through the press. *Le Cri du Togo* went out of print, but d'Almeida was involved with two other newspapers which were established after the Second World War: *Les Cloches du Togo* (The Bells of Togo) and *Le Progrés* (The Progress.)[60]

The 1930s had brought a new generation of Afro-Brazilians to the fore in Togo. The Olympio family was well represented in this generation. Pedro Olympio, son of Octaviano Olympio, and born in Lomé on 28 May 1898, had started his studies at the German elementary school run by the Steyler Mission. After being tutored at home, and after studying for a year and half at the German secondary school in Lomé, Pedro left Lomé in May 1914 accompanying a catholic priest, Rev. Franz Wolf, who was a good friend of his father, to attend school in Europe.

Pedro stayed in Steyl, Netherlands, studying under the care of missionaries until he went to Germany in 1917, to continue his studies. He entered medical school in 1920, studied in Bonn and Munich, and graduated in 1925. After defending his dissertation and exercising his medical residency, Pedro Olympio returned to Lomé in 1928. As the first Togolese medical doctor, he opened a private medical clinic in 1938. In 1932, he had been appointed by the French to the *Commission municipale de Lomé* (Municipal Commission of Lomé) his first political position. Afro-Brazilians, Paulin

Jacinto Kofi de Freitas (a teacher) and Felício de Souza (former president of the *Conseil de notables),* were also members of this commission.[61]

Another member of the new generation was Sylvanus Olympio, son of Epiphanio Olympio. He had been born on 6 September 1902, and was the oldest of his father's thirty children. Sylvanus attended the German elementary school in Lomé. Afterwards, he went on to attend a British secondary school and once the French took over, he went to the French school where he excelled. One result of his multi-lingual schooling was that Sylvanus Olympio could eventually speak seven languages, of which three were West African languages: Fon, Ewe and Yoruba, and four European languages: Portuguese, German, English and French.

At the instance of his older cousin (João Jeronimo Amorin) he went to England at the age of 18 to continue his studies. Amorin was, by then, the general representative for the United Africa Company in West Africa, and he convinced Epiphanio Olympio that the best course of action was to send his son, Sylvanus, to England. For two years Sylvanus prepared himself for the London Matriculation exam, which he passed, and then was admitted to the London School of Economics in 1922.

After graduating in 1926, Sylvanus went to Dijon, France, and Vienna, Austria, to study international law. In 1927, he was hired by the British company, Unilever, and returned to West Africa as the company's representative in Lagos, Nigeria. Sylvanus' political career started in 1938, when he was back in Lomé, and was invited by the French to be vice-president of the *Cercle des amitiés française* (Circle of French Friendship), an organization which aimed at bringing together members of all layers of Togolese society: French citizens, *notables, evolués* and traditional chiefs, and had the implicit intent of propagating French civilization and at the same time counterbalancing the activities of the pro-German *Togo Bund*. Ironically, the *Cercle* would become the embryo of the political party that would lead Togo towards independence from France, in 1960.[62]

Upon the advent of the Second World War in September of 1939, Togo became an arena for political maneuvering by the allies (represented by the British in neighbouring Gold Coast), and the pro-Pétain faction in Lomé. Although the indigenous population was mostly uninterested in the 'affairs of the Whites,' the notables took their sides. The Olympio family seems to have sympathized with the allied cause and was considered pro-English. Sylvanus Olympio was arrested by the pro-Pétain governor in Lomé in 1942 and detained under surveillance at a hotel in Djougou in Dahomey for several weeks. His imprisonment would colour, forever, his relationship with the French.[63]

In May of 1945, upon the victory of the allies in Europe, the new French governor in Togo, Jean Noutary, organized a Conference in Lomé to determine, among other issues, the future level of indigenous participation in the local government, the industrialization of the colony and its social development. At least three Afro-Brazilians, Sylvanus and Pedro Olympio and Jacintho da Silva, were members of this Conference. Sylvanus Olympio dominated the discussions. This Conference was an early forum for his outstanding oratory skills.

At one point in the proceedings Sylvanus Olympio expressed in no uncertain terms how he believed in the identity of Togo as a country: 'We want to remain Togolese [and] we want to evolve in our own setting. We have a history [. . .], we have [. . .] a language [and] we have an interest that our children should learn. . . [them].' This Conference was considered to be of great historical significance for Togo because it offered a forum for the burgeoning nationalism of the Togolese people which had been nurtured since the beginning of the twentieth century.[64]

Togo's political growth continued to take place with the formation of political parties and countrywide elections in October 1945. But total independence from France would not be achieved for another 15 years – 27 April 1960. At the helm of the first fully independent Togolese government was a member of the second generation of Afro-Brazilians, born in Africa, and the grandson of the *baiano* Francisco Olympio da Silva, who arrived in Africa more than one hundred years before. As if to demonstrate the full measure of the heritage combined in his name, both Brazilian and African, he was: Sylvanus Epiphanio Kwami Olympio.[65]

Sylvanus Olympio's presidency lasted less than three years.[66] Olympio was assassinated in a coup d'état, the first violent political coup in sub-Saharan Africa, during the night of 12-13 January 1963, by a group of rebellious demobilized Togolese veterans of the French Army. Olympio had refused to integrate them into the Togolese Army. He believed that the country did not need a large Army, and also did not have the funds to pay for it.

Olympio's assassination has not, as a historian so aptly put it, been 'forgotten or forgiven' by his children and it has influenced the political life of Togo ever since.[67] Olympio's children, primarily his sons Gilchrist and Bonito Olympio, were involved, along with the self-exiled Togolese Afro-Brazilian elite, in several attempts to overthrow Gnassingbé Eyadéma, who assassinated Sylvanus Olympio and eventually took the post of president. The presidency was transferred to his son Fauré Gnassingbé after the father's death, in February of 2005, after 38 years in power.[68]

Many Afro-Brazilians went into exile after the coup of 1963. Gilchrist Olympio only returned to Togo after 25 years. In July of 1991 he went back to Lomé and was received by throngs of well wishers. On 5 May 1992, while campaigning for the presidential elections that would soon take place in Togo, he almost died in an assassination attempt, and had to be evacuated to Paris where he was treated for six months.[69]

At least one other descendant of Francisco Olympio has been assassinated in Togo because of his politics. Tavio Amorin, a great-great-grandson of Francisco Olympio,[70] was gunned down on the streets of Lomé on 23 July 1992. He was born in Lomé on 20 November 1958, and educated locally before studying math and physics at the University of Poitiers in France. At the time of his assassination he was the leader of the *Parti Socialiste Pan-Africain* (Socialist Pan-African Party.) Tavio Amorin had been living in Côte d'Ivoire since 1989 and had returned home in the hopes that there would be a political opening. He was shot in broad daylight by the Togolese military. He was also evacuated to Paris for treatment, but did not survive his wounds.[71]

Thus being of Afro-Brazilian ancestry in Togo today is both an asset and a handicap. The community has long remained in the high echelons of government, industry and education due to its early economic and educational successes, but no longer holds a unique place in Togolese society. Nevertheless, one must recognize the many and unique contributions of the Afro-Brazilian community to the development of modern Togo when studying the country's history. This chapter of Brazilian and African history deserves to be studied and preserved for future generations.

ENDNOTES

1. An earlier version of this article can be found in Amos, 2001.
2. Independent Scholar, Washington, D.C., alcionea@aol.com
3. Togo's Afro-Brazilian elite identified itself as part of the Ewe ethnic group. AfroBrazilians from Anecho identified themselves as Mina. Lawrance, 2007:25; Lange, 1998:56, Marguerat, 2001: 600, 603, 605.
4. 'Histoire de l'aïeul Francisco Silva Olympio.'; unpublished manuscript in the author's private collection, hereafter cited as 'Histoire'; Cornevin, 1963:110; Cornevin, 1987:148.
5. 'Histoire;' Cornevin, 1963:110; Cornevin, 1987:148; Pedler, 1974:108-109; Souza, 1992:296; letter from Lucien Bebi Olympio to author May 3, 1996, hereafter mentioned as letter May 3, 1996. About the Cerqueira Lima family see Verger, 1964:35.

6. 'Histoire;' Borghero, 1997:124-25; Burton, 1966:65.
7. Francisco Olympio was probably maintaining an outpost in Porto Seguro after he had already moved his business to Agoue, since in 1859 one of his children, Octaviano Olympio, was born in the last location. 'Ascendants-descendants-collatéraux de feu Octaviano Olympio,' unpublished manuscript in the author's private collection, hereafter cited as 'Ascendants.'
8. Verger, 1992:43-48; Krasnowolski, 1987:101; Decalo, 1996:26; Cornevin, 1981:135-36, Cornevin, 1987:153; unnamed unpublished document dated July 27 [or 29], 1870, explaining how Francisco Olympio obtained his lands for services rendered during the war between Agoue and Petit-Popo, copy in the author's private collection; 'Histoire.' Olympio's old house in Agoue was demolished in 1988. Guran, 1999:61.
9. Letter May 3, 1996; 'Ascendants.' Although they were known as Afro-Brazilians, Francisca and Antonio never came to Brazil, but they had been slaves of a Brazilian owner in Agoue and had been integrated into the Afro-Brazilian community there, Guran, 1999:57.
10. Coquery-vidrovitch, 1971:120; Verger, 1953; Turner, 1975:115-16; Krasnowolski, 1987:104; Thomas, 1997:696.
11. 'Le père Octaviano Olympio,' unpublished manuscript in the author's private collection; hereafter cited as 'Le père;' letter of May 3, 1996; 'Histoire;' Sebald, 1988:62.
12. Sebald, 1988:62; letter of May 3, 1996. Francisco Olympio was at least semi-literate in Portuguese. He finished a letter, written by another person in French, in good Portuguese but with a bad handwriting as follows: 'Desejo-lhe boa saúde [illegible] seu pay Olympio.' Letter from Francisco Olympio to Octaviano Olympio, May 17, 1905, Agoue, copy in the author's private collection.
13. Turner, 1975: 125-17, 161-62b; letter from Lucien Bebi Olympio to the author May 3, 1996; 'Histoire.,'
14. 'Le père;' letter of May 3, 1996; 'Histoire;' funeral programme for Julia Francisca Olympio, in the author's private collection; Guran, 1999:60.
15. Letter from Julio Olympio to Francisco Olympio, Jan. 17, 1897, Rio de Janeiro, copy in the author's private collection. Another version of events is that Julio died in Brazil and that is the reason he never returned. Guran, 1999:59.
16. In 1950, ethnologist Pierre Verger visited Epiphanio Olympio (born in 1872) at his house in Agoue and was serenaded with Brazilian songs, Verger, 2004:128. Fourteen years later, Antonio Olinto, a Brazilian diplomat, visited Epiphanio in Agoue and the two spoke in Portuguese, Olinto, 1980:219-20.
17. Marguerat And Peleï, V.2, 1993:169; Quam-dessu, 1981:33.
18. Pedler, 1974:108.

19. Memorandum of Agreement, December 12, 1882, between W. H. Williams on behalf of Swanzy and Joachim Acolatse, Francisco Olympio, Jr. signed as a witness; Fonds allemand (FA) 1/601: 30, Archives nationales du Togo (ANT); Marguerat, 1992:10; 'Ascendants.' For a history of the early development of Lomé, in English, see Sebald, 1977: 36-38.
20. Sebald, 1988:62, 234; Gayibor, 1997:40.
21. Knoll, 1978:18-20; Marguerat, 1992:13-14; Sebald, 1988:62, FA 3/315: 10; FA 3/313:71-75, ANT; 'Father of the Ewe Unit,' 1951:207; hereafter cited as 'Father;' Marguerat and Peleï, 1992, v.1:12. Felício de Souza would later be known as 'Kokouvidokita' because of his work as a nurse under the Germans. Marguerat and Roux, 1993:150.
22. Marguerat and Peleï, 1993, v.2:59-60, 175; FA 3/313:40, 44, 71-75, ANT.
23. Sebald, 1988:411.
24. Müller, 1968: 41; Lange,1991: 34; Souza, 1992:49, 185.
25. The *Eweschule von Westheim*, was created by the German Presbyterian Bremen Mission to specifically train Ewe students as pastors to replace the German missionaries who could not resist the harsh climate in Africa, Ahadji, 2003:120. Debrunner, 1965:356; 'She Translated Tolstoy into Ewe,' 1950:1221; Grau, 1964: 34; Ahadji, 2003:188-22. It is not clear if this João Gonçalves Baeta was the same who came to Africa with Francisco Olympio in 1853. Robert's father was described as a 'mulatto of Portuguese origin' and educated at the Wesleyan Mission in Lagos. He might have been the son of the original João Gonçalves Baeta. Ahadji, 2003:118.
26. Akakpo-numado, 2003:199-208.
27. Marguerat, 1993:167-76; Marguerat, Lomé, in preparation.
28. FA 3/313: 43, ANT; David, 1995:168; David, 1999:44; 'Ascendants;' Marguerat and Peleï, 1993, v. 2: 73; electronic mail from Yves Marguerat to author, Mar. 25, 1998; obituary of Fabriano Francisco Olympio, copy in the author's personal collection.
29. Sebald 1988: 68, 71; Agier 1983: 65, 67; Delval, 1980:156. Delval, citing Rev. Jean-Marie Cessou, Apostolic Vicar of Togo, mentions that one of the main businesses of the Hausa traders, connected with Octaviano, was slave trading. According to Cessou there was, for a long time, a slave trading route connecting Lomé, Agoue, Keta and Salaga. The slaves sold were from the Gurunsi ethnic group. It is possible that Octaviano profited from this trafficking, although this is not explicitly mentioned by Cessou, Delval, 1980:156. Slavery and the slave trade continued under the Germans. Governor von Puttkamer himself received between 100 and 200 slaves from Salaga to serve as soldiers, Maier, 1987:75.
30. Kratz, 1984:168; Olympio started exporting copra in 1895, long before the

German plantation was able to produce any copra for export. Seidel, [1898], 1997:32. When Olympio died in 1940 he left among other property, four coconut plantations in Agoue, Kpogan, Baguida and Lomé. The Lomé plantation exported more than 16 tons of copra in the period 1942/1943 and had a net income of over 25,000 Francs. 'Depôt de process- verbal de deliberation du Conseil de famille des heritièrs de feu Octaviano Olympio,' unpublished manuscript in the author's private collection, hereafter cited as 'Depôt.' The German company H. Schlinck & Cie. of Hamburg produced *Palmin Feinstes Cocosfett zum Koche, Braten und Backen* (Palmin Finest Coconut lard for cooking, frying and baking) in the nineteenth century. http://aesop.creighton.edu/jcupub/palmin_coconut_lard.htm

31. Sebald, 1988:103, 122, 234; Marguerat, 1993:67; Knoll, 1978:155, Marguerat And Peleï, 1996, v.3: 135, 187. In 1918 Octaviano Olympio stated that he had worked for Swanzy Brothers in Lomé for 11 years beginning in 1882, declaration of Octaviano Olympio, Lomé, Mar. 21, 1918 in Marguert, 1999: 426; Agreement between F. & A. Swanzy and Octaviano Olympio, Sep. 10, 1892, copy in the author's private collection; District de Lomé, Rapport annuel, 1903-1904 (1er avril 1903 au 31 mars 1904.), FA 3/159: 21-24, ANT; Gayibor, 1997:40, 77.
32. Souza, 1992: 38; FA 3/313: 2; FA 3/131: 68; FA 3/315:10, ANT; personal communication from Yves Marguerat, May 28, 1998; Marguerat, 1993: 76, n. 1; Sebald, 1980:62.
33. Knoll, 1978:139; Marguerat, 1995:375, N. 13, N. 14, Marguerat, 1993: 76, N. 2; Sebald, 1988: 378, 380.
34. Knoll 1978: 70; Sebald 1988: 210; Marguerat, 1995: 368.
35. Marguerat, 1995:369; Gouverneur von Zech an den Plantagenbesitzer Oktavio [sic] Olympio in Lome, Jun. 29, 1909, copy in the author's private collection.
36. Marguerat, 1995:373-74, 375 N. 20; Debrunner, 1965:121; Baeta, 1925:12-13. There were no lasting hard feelings against Mecklenburg's actions. In 1960, when he was 87 years old, Mecklenburg was present as an official guest at Togo's Independence celebrations in Lomé. During his visit he was honoured at a reception offered by members of the *Togo Bund,* met the widow of a Togolese son he had left behind when he exited the country in 1914, visited a German school which had his name and went to Kpalime where he was greeted by local chiefs wearing the German medals he had bestowed on them in the early 1910s. Decalo, 1996: 206; Grau, 1964: 34; Napo-Issa And Oloukpona-Yinnon, 2003:280; 'German Duke's Visit,' 1960:A6.
37. Amegan, 1997:107.
38. Moberly, 1931:5-7, 14-141; Marguerat, 1999:409-32; Sebald, 1988:598; Marguerat, 1995:376.
39. Gayibor, 1997:103.

40. Gayibor, 1997:110-11, 47 N.1.
41. Têtê-adjalogo, 1998:180-81; Napo-Issa and Oloukpona-Yinnon, 2003:271.
42. Oloukpona-Yinnon, 1984/1985:123; 126-27.
43. Telegram from Octaviano Olympio to Horatio Bottomley, London, Sep. 12, 1919, R20, 1/3099, Doc. 4900, League of Nations Archives and Historical Collections Unit, United Nations Library, Geneva, Switzerland. This file contains six telegrams signed by Olympio; files CO 96/599/66055 and CO 96/607/4048 Public Record Office, The National Archives, England contains three telegrams signed by Olympio; WILSON, 1924:467-68. The cause of the Togolese wanting to remain under the British was also taken by the Anti-Slavery & Aborigines Protection Society in London which published in its journal the telegram that Olympio sent to Lord Milner, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 'The Natives of Togoland,' 1919:69-71.
44. According to Bonnecarrère, Octaviano Olympio told him: 'It is up to you … it will be your actions that will make us appreciate France, we will observe … what you do.' Letter from Bonnecarrère to Minister of Colonies, June 28, 1924, copy in the author's private collection, hereafter cited as Bonnecarrère to Minister of Colonies.
45. Personal communications from Yves Marguerat, May 28, 1998 and June 8, 1998; Decalo, 1996:9697; Marguerat, Lomé, in preparation; Bonnecarrère to Minister of Colonies; 'French Methods in Togoland,'1924:1056b-1057; 'Un ami fidèle et loyal de la France. M. Octavio [sic] Olympio,' 1925:19-20; receipt of deposit from Banque de l'Afrique occidentale in the amount of 10,000 Francs dated Jul. 25, 1938, copy in the author's private collection. Felício de Souza was the first president elected of the *Conseil*, .marguerat and Roux, 1993:150.
46. Marguerat, 2001: 388-91; Marguerat, 2003: 392-93; Têtê-Adjalogo, 1998: 77-78.
47. Marguerat, 2001:600, 589, 605; Decalo, 1996:255-56; Quam-Dessu, 1981:31; Têtê-Adjalogo, 1998:476.
48. Têtê-Adjalogo, 1998:475-81.
49. Marguerat, Lomé, in preparation; Almeida-Ékuè, 1992:85; letters to Octaviano Olympio from ministre de l'Agriculture, France, Mar. 10, 1925; ministre de Colonies, France, Feb. 23; 1927; ministre de l'Agriculture, France, Jan. 9, 1931; copies in the author's private collection.
50. Müller, 1982: 225.
51. A *canton* was a group of adjacent villages. The *chief de canton* was appointed by the French governor and essentially was responsible for transmitting the decisions made by the French colonial authorities to the local indigenous chiefs and making sure they were implemented. Schuerkens, 2001:403-404.
52. 'Ascendants;' letter, May 5, 1996; Decalo, 1996:222-23. When Octaviano

Olympio died in 1940 at 81 years of age he still had five children who were minors: Lydia, Angelo, Virginia, João and Luciano, 'Depôt.'

53. Gbédémah, 1982-1984, Ii: 317, 320.
54. Gbédémah,1982-1984, I: 434; Ii: 447, 453, 495; Agbanon, 1991:46; Tété-Adjalogo, 1998: photo no. 20 on p. 128. At times Afro-Brazilians represented almost half of the members of the *Conseil* in Lomé. That was the case in 1933 when out of nine representatives four were Afro-Brazilian. Octaviano Olympio, Jacintho Aguiar, Felício de Souza and Augustino de Souza who represented two neighbourhoods, Pauvert, 1960:175.
55. Almeida-Ékuè, 1992:35.
56. *Duawo* is a contraction of the Ewe word *Dukoawo* which means people. Tété-Adjalogo, 1998:195.
57. Almeida-Ékuè 1992:35.
58. Almeida- Ékuè, 1992: 99-105; Gbédémah, V. 2 1982:155, 180.
59. Almeida- Ékuè, 1992:78, 81, 82; Guillaneuf, 1967:7/1, 12/1. 15, 17/1; Lawrance, 2007:161.
60. Amlalo And Gatowonu, 1998:114; For a biography of Pedro Olympio in German see Firla-Forkl, 2005.
61. Gbédémah, V. 2 1982; 286-87; Yagla, 1992:87, N. 65, 52; Amlalo and Gatowonu, 1998:114; Kokouvi-Agboli, 1992:60-64.
62. Marguerat, 1994:59, 61; Kokouvi-Agboli, 1992: 65.
63. Marguerat, 1994:70, 71; Kokouvi-Agboli, 1992: 66.
64. Marguerat, 1994:74; Souza, 1992:271; Gbédèmah, 1982, 4:307. Sylvanus Olympio's Brazilian heritage was brought up during his political campaigns. An opposition newspaper once stated 'We will send Mr Olympio back to Brazil,' quoted in Guillaneuf, 1967:13/3. It is out of the scope of this paper to deal with the participation of Sylvanus Olympio and Augustino de Souza in the movement for Ewe unification which preceded the movement for independence of Togo. For more on the subject see: Amenumey, 1989.
65. An excellent and compact review of Sylvanus Olympio's short presidency appears in Lawrance, 2007: 179-80.
66. Decalo, 1996:225.
67. Bonito Olympio died in 1994. Decalo, 1996:220-21, 101, 102-3, 221-22; Kohnert, 2007:3, 9: *Avril 2005*, 2005:29.
68. Decalo, 1996:221-22. More recently Gilchirst Olympio has been engaged in talks with Fauré Gnassingbé with the intention of bringing an end to the cycle of violence that has gripped Togo for so many years. Kohnert, 2007:15, 18-19. Another member of the Olympio family has been part of the government of Eyadéma, he is Harry Octaviano Olympio who held ministerial positions in 1998 and 2002. He was a candidate for the presidency in the 2005 elections

and ended last with just 0.55% of the vote. He is in opposition to his cousin Gilchrist. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_Olympio

69. Tavio Amorin was the son of Carlos Amorin, grandson of João Jeronimo Amorin and great-grandson of Alvez and Laurinda Olympio Amorin. Letter of May 3, 1996.

70. Degli, 1996:125-26; 250; Decalo, 1996:42. Political persecution of Afro-Brazilian descendants in Togo continued to exist until recently. In 2006 the author of this paper served as an expert witness preparing an affidavit on behalf of a member of the Souza Togolese family who was asking for political asylum in the United States due to political persecution in Togo.

7

THE AFRO-BRAZILIAN RETURNEES IN GHANA

SAMUEL BOADI-SIAW

INTRODUCTION

One interesting outcome of the infamous slave trade from Africa is the scattering of millions of African people now found in different parts of the world. This has had a significant impact on the history of the world as the forced exiles contributed markedly to the development of the places to which they were involuntarily sent. But not all were prepared to remain in the places of their exile forever if they could help it. Thus from the late eighteenth century, many of these Africans started to return to the mother continent, especially to the west coast of Africa. The return of these forced migrants after a long stay in foreign lands (in most cases, all their lives), should not surprise us. Forcibly taken from their homes, they never forgot that they belonged in Africa, and not to the places of their enforced exile. Throughout the period of their painful stay, the enslaved Africans held memories of their homes and, in many cases, held on to and re-created aspects of their civilization, as a number of studies have shown.[1] Indeed, many of these can be identified in places like Bahia (and Brazil generally), the islands off the coast of the Carolinas in the United States of America, and in the Caribbean Islands.

The term 'Returnee' is used here to refer to those Africans in the Diaspora, who physically came back to settle on the African coast, after they secured their freedom from slavery. In most cases they did not necessarily return to their original homes and ethnic people. In fact, most of them settled in the coastal towns where they found greater opportunity for economic survival, and where they could hope to avoid being re-enslaved, particularly before the mid-1850's. What mattered was their return to the African continent, the motherland from which they or their forebears had been wrenched years before.

Even many of those who did not physically return nevertheless kept up their ties with the African continent and their people at home, in spirit

through the religious and cultural movements and ceremonies like the *candomblé* in Brazil, *santeria* in Cuba, *voodoo* in Haiti, or *shango* in Jamaica. In that sense, they also made a return to their roots in spirit if not in body, as scholars like Don C. Ohadike have argued.[2]

It was natural that these forced migrants would desire to return to Africa. But for the thousands who succeeded in doing so, there were millions who could not. Most of them died whilst still enslaved. Others could not do so even when they became free, because they did not have the resources like passports, means of transport and money to sustain them on their arrival on the African continent. There was also the challenge of identifying exactly where they originally came from, since they had been taken away in circumstances that did not allow them to easily identify the places from which they had been captured. In most cases they had been captured from far inland and brought over long distances to the coast through regions with which they were not familiar.

The most important factor, however, that prevented many from returning was the misinformation and mis-education about Africa received by the descendants of those who were taken away. The image presented of Africa, as backward, full of inter-tribal wars, wild animals and seriously deprived, with no proper housing or clothing discouraged many who knew nothing else. This was reinforced, before the mid-nineteenth century, by the fear of possible re-capture since the slave trade continued until then.

Nevertheless the awareness that Africa was home and the desire to return at least to die there and have a proper burial, represented a potent force. This caused many to leave whatever they had in the places of their forced migration and risk the hazardous sea voyage, as well as the uncertainty about what would happen to them on arrival. This accounts for the large number of first generation Afro-Brazilians ('Africanos' as they were called in Brazil) among the returnees from Brazil.[3]

Another reason why many returned derived from their belief that, back at home, they would have the opportunity to put their skills and abilities to better use. Many had acquired artisan skills, professional abilities and Western education. Though they could use such skills in the foreign places, their opportunities were limited by the prejudices held by their former owners and others and the discrimination practiced against them. The Whites found their work useful, but showed little appreciation.

Those who had embraced Christianity in their places of exile hoped to share this with the people back home. Among the returnees to Sierra Leone and Liberia, for instance, one could count a number of Reverend Ministers and pastors who took care of the spiritual needs of other returnees,

and went further afield to share their faith with the people they came to meet in their places of settlement. Even among the Brazilians, the Roman Catholics organized catholic observances for themselves and welcomed and supported the first Roman Catholic missionaries in places like Porto Novo and Lagos.[4]

The generally unfriendly attitude of many Whites towards the free Africans acted as the most potent force that pushed many of these to return to the African continent after they became free. In the southern United States and Bahia, for instance, the slave owners and authorities saw these free Africans as a threat and a bad example to those they still held enslaved. They thus created an unwelcome atmosphere that was oppressive, and limited opportunities for the free Africans to improve their socio-economic well-being.[5]

In the case of Bahia, after a series of uprisings culminating in the famous 1835 Revolt of the Malês in Salvador, the local authorities passed a series of laws that placed severe restrictions on all Africans, but especially on the free ones, including fines, arrest of any group of Africans found congregating in any number above three, prohibition of the purchase of houses by free Africans without official authorization, imprisonment and deportation of those merely 'suspected of trying to provoke' slaves to rise in revolt.[6] The hostility was such that the free Africans in many cases found it difficult, even to make a living, and faced the danger of arrest, imprisonment or even death from the slave owners and others. One option was to leave the place altogether and return to the African coast.

For the Afro-Brazilians, many of these reasons were at work. In the period before 1835, the main reasons related to the desire to return home, were to have better opportunities for improving themselves using the skills and abilities they had acquired, and the desire to share these with the people back home. But after 1835 a new factor provided the major impetus for many to leave for West Africa. As Jerry Turner demonstrated in his thesis, the atmosphere in Bahia after the famous African revolt there became particularly hostile, restrictive and oppressive for free Africans. The local authorities passed a series of laws that placed severe restrictions on all Africans, but especially on the free ones. This forced many to leave the area.[7]

THE PRESENT TABOM COMMUNITY

The Afro-Brazilian returnees (known as the 'Tabom' at present) have formed a community which, though scattered in different parts of Accra and even beyond, maintain a sense of identity and common bonds. Although this

feeling of belonging derives from their ties with Brazil, the Tabom have been almost completely absorbed into Ga society – in political organisation, social patterns, language and in religious beliefs and practices. In other words, apart from a few traces of Brazilian and Nigerian (Yoruba specifically) cultural remains, these people cannot be distinguished from any other Ga person, or Ghanaian, for that matter.

The reason for this can be traced, to a large extent, to the manner in which they left Brazil and arrived in Ghana. Those Afro-Brazilian returnees arrived as individuals and families who had to leave Brazil on their own and at their own expense, apart from those who were deported from Bahia.[8] In fact, whether they came of their own volition or were deported, once they left Brazil, they were on their own and had to take their destinies into their own hands.

No government or private sponsors existed either in Brazil or on the West African coast, to support or fight for their well-being. They did not have the sponsorship that those who came to Sierra Leone from Britain, Nova Scotia and Jamaica, or even the Americo-Liberians had in the Society for the Protection of the Black Poor (and later the Sierra Leone company) and the American Colonisation Society respectively. The Afro-Brazilian returnees, in the circumstances, had to quickly adapt to the society to which they had come, and to accept whatever would enable them to survive – the food, language, religion and general way of life.

NUMBERS AND LOCATION

Interviewees are uncertain at the moment about the number of the descendants of the Afro-Brazilians. They only assert that they are numerous. It is rather difficult to find the exact numbers since they are scattered, and 'Tabom' is not a criterion used to describe anybody in the censuses that have been taken.

However, since the early returnees numbered in the hundreds and more continued to arrive throughout the nineteenth century, one can guess that they would number in the tens of thousands by now.

The Tabom do not live in any one locality, even in Accra. Some of them live in the beach area of Otublohum, but others can be found in Adabraka, Otukpai and other areas of the capital. The rest have moved to other cities and towns as work and opportunity have dictated.

Politically, one finds that, like other Ga communities, the Tabom have a system of government headed by a chief – Tabom Mantse – who is also a sub-chief under the Otublohum Mantse, one of the seven traditional rulers in the Ga state. So far the Tabom have had six Mantses: Nii Azumah I (1836-

1865); Nii Azumah II (1865-1900); Nii Arunah I (1900-1926); Nii Azumah III (1936-1961); Nii Azumah IV (1961-1981) and Nii Azumah V 1998- .[9]

The current Tabom chief was chosen by a committee made up of some of the older members of the community. He was chosen from the Azumah Nelson family i.e. the family of the leader of the first group of arrivals in Accra.[10] Currently, this committee is chaired by Mr Dan Morton, a well-known tailor and trainer of tailors in Accra. They, at the same time, elected the current Queen mother, (the female counterpart of the chief in the traditional Ghanaian political set up), Nee Awo Gbeke Abiana III.

These leaders the Mantse, queen mother and committee, are supported by others like the Okyeame (spokesperson for the chief), a leader of the young people, a 'war captain' who now mainly helps to organize the people and others in the typical Ghanaian fashion. In reality, therefore, the political organization clearly takes after the Ga system, which has taken a lot from the Akan traditional political set up. They have also adopted the type of clothing, symbols of office and other paraphernalia of the Ga chiefs, as can be observed whenever they attend any public function.

In social practices, the Tabom have adopted the Ga Homowo festival as their main cultural and religious ceremony, celebrated every year as a harvest festival. They also celebrate it in the same way the other Ga people generally do it. Interestingly and significantly, neither the carnival nor any other Brazilian festival features among the Tabom; nor does the Samba music and dance at present.

However, the Tabom also have their own cultural manifestations that speak of their background. One of these is the Agbe drum and music played at funerals, weddings and other ceremonies. In fact, the Agbe musicians and drummers attract patronage not only in the Tabom community, but also in the wider Ga community. The songs that accompany the Agbe drums have mainly Yoruba lyrics. This may be traced to their links with Nigeria as some are believed to have stopped over in Lagos before coming to Accra.[11] However, it seems to simply reflect the Brazilian (Bahian) connection, since Bahia was the port of departure for most. It had a very strong Yoruba influence on its religion, spoken language, music and folklore. Yoruba gods like Shango, Yansan, Oshosi and Yemanja, for instance, are well-known and revered among Brazilians, particularly the Afro-Brazilians. Many of these spoke Yoruba in the nineteenth century. As late as the 1960s, some old ladies in Bahia still spoke Yoruba.[12]

The Tabom people also have their own flag, which they carry in procession during festivals. On the flag is the word TABON, written in yellow on a green background, with a white crescent moon and a star above it. Below is the

word OLULUKOLU, written in white. 'Olulukolu' is the ceremonial call of the Tabom Mantse, to which the people respond with 'Amogidiabo.' Exactly what these words mean is not definitely known, but Schaumloeffel found the same expressions in Yoruba where the Yoruba war leader shouted 'Olulukolu' and received the response 'Amogidiabo,' meaning 'a king has arrived' and 'the strongest will listen to you.'[13]

Again the link of the Tabom with the Yoruba and Brazil comes through. The colours yellow and green are the dominant colours of Brazil's flag, and the ruler's shout and reply go back to the Yoruba connection. The crescent moon and star also show the Muslim background of a majority of the earliest Afro-Brazilian arrivals in Accra.[14]

Like other Ghanaian groups, the Tabom celebrate the death of a family member in an elaborate way, but they end the ceremonies after the fortieth day with a celebration which they call 'Okudjornor.' This celebration also has many elements that recall their stay in Brazil and the initial strong Muslim influence.[15]

Among the Tabom one finds adherents of all the major religions practised in Ghana. Some still hold on to the Roman Catholic faith their ancestors followed in Brazil. Others have embraced various branches of the Protestant faith – Methodists, like Professor Cyril Fiscian; Anglicans, like Bishop George Aruna Kojo Nelson; and Assemblies of God church members, like Mrs Georgina Wood.

Some have remained Muslim, but they seem to be few. The Muslim influence in the community, however, remains strong, especially in names like Aruna (Mr George Aruna Nelson, current Dean of the Tabom) and Dr Aruna Morton (one time private physician to Dr Kwame Nkrumah), Abdulai (one of the original names of the current Tabom Mantse), Musa, Alii, Zinabu, Adisa,Yusif, Harun, etc.[16] The decline in the number of Muslims can be ascribed to the fact that Afro-Brazilians sent their children to Christian mission schools, especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Many of the Tabom, however, adhere to the beliefs and practices of their ancestors, even if they profess to be Christians. In many houses, family gods are worshipped at family shrines – especially at festivals and other religious occasions. Interestingly, one of the gods worshipped among the Tabom is the Yoruba god, Shango, further evidence of the Bahia–Yoruba connection.

The Tabom on the whole, then, show that they have adapted very well to the Ga environment. The languages spoken by the Tabom of Accra are Ga, and other Ghanaian languages like Twi and English. Few now speak any Portuguese, the language of Brazil. For all practical purposes then, in this,

as in other areas, the Tabom have lost most of what linked them to Brazil, despite their obvious pride in their past connections to her.

Recent research has thrown more light on these Afro-Brazilian returnees in Accra. In particular, Marco Aurelio Schaumloeffel, (2007), and Alcione M. Amos and E. Ayesu (2002) have taken further the work of Pierre Verger (1968), Raymundo Souza Dantas (1965), S.S. Quarcoopome (1970) and S.Y. Boadi-Siaw (1982) on these Afro-Brazilian returnees in Ghana. They have further clarified our knowledge about their arrival dates, number of arrivals, names and their contributions to the development of Accra and Ghana. Their work also confirms the earlier conclusions about the attitude of these returnees to land ownership, education and religion as largely based on their experiences and skills gathered during their stay in Brazil.

The Brazilian returnees began to arrive in Accra in the early decades of the nineteenth century. These years had witnessed several revolts and attempted revolts by the African population in Brazil [in the province of Bahia alone, about eleven such revolts and plots to revolt occurred between 1807 and 1835]. These culminated in a major uprising in 1835 that so shook the provincial authorities that they adopted harsh measures against the African population. These measures included the deportation of all free Africans suspected of being even remotely connected to any plots; restrictions on the movement of all Africans, fines, and imprisonment of Africans found congregating. The resulting atmosphere pushed many free Africans to leave the province of Bahia for other provinces, but the more daring left Brazil altogether for West Africa, which they regarded as their home.[17]

It was from such an atmosphere that we believe the first group of the Afro- Brazilian returnees came to Accra in 1829 aboard the ship *Salisbury*. The group was comprised of about seven families, most of whom were apparently of Hausa Muslim origin, as their names indicated.[18] The Muslims in particular found the situation in Bahia (Brazil) extremely difficult. They could not openly practice their religion since everybody was expected to be Roman Catholic. The involvement of some Muslims as leaders in the revolts by Africans at the time made them the special target of official persecution. This would explain the predominance of Muslims in this first group of arrivals.[19]

Another group of Afro-Brazilians, two hundred of them, reportedly arrived in Accra in 1836 from the province of Bahia. These most likely formed part of those who were deported or left Bahia on their own after the 1835 revolt there. This group included both Roman Catholics and Muslims. A third group of immigrants arrived, also in 1836, from Brazil, having apparently first touched down at Lagos. Again a significant number must

have been Muslims as they had a Muslim religious leader called Mahama Sokoto. Others, either individually or in groups, no doubt came from Brazil after 1836 since we know from various sources that Afro-Brazilian returnees continued to arrive on the West African coast right to the end of the nineteenth century and beyond.[20]

The first group of Brazilian returnees was welcomed by the local ruler, Kwaku Ankrah, the Otublohum chief of Dutch Accra (i.e. the area of Accra under the influence of the Dutch, who had the fort Crevecoeur). Chief Ankrah readily took the Brazilian returnees under his wing, gave them land on which to build, and incorporated some of them into his family and business. As the chief broker in the trade with the Dutch, this reception proved very helpful to the returnees in their settling down. With land to build on as well as the goodwill of a local ruler, they had obviously found a home.[21]

CONTRIBUTIONS

The Brazilians arrived without any sponsor and knew no one who could welcome them. Fortunately, the chief of Otublohum, as already indicated, gave them a ready welcome that helped them settle and adapt to local life. The Otublohum Mantse and the Ga paramount chief, Tackie Tawiah, also gave them land in such areas of present-day Accra as Tudu, Asylum Down, the main train station and around the Accra Brewery, on which to farm.[22] The new arrivals had come with important artisan skills like carpentry, masonry and joinery, among others, and thus quickly set to work putting up their houses. They built them of stone, not mud, and roofed them with thatch. Thus Mama Nassu, one of the leaders of the earliest arrivals, constructed his house near the sea coast on the street now significantly called Brazil Lane. Remains of other stone houses built by these Brazilian returnees can still be found in that area of Accra.

This architectural innovation was an important contribution by the Tabom to Accra (and Ghana's) development. Later, in the early twentieth century when some Accra people had become well-to-do lawyers, merchants, civil servants and cocoa farmers, they put up multi-storey houses of stone, copying the architectural patterns introduced by the Brazilian returnees.[23]

The Brazilians also contributed to the economic life of Accra in other ways. They used their various European artisan skills to provide for their families. The masons, carpenters and joiners found employment putting up buildings not only for themselves and their compatriots, but also for the European firms, colonial officials and later for the richer Accra citizens. Others worked as goldsmiths, tailors and seamstresses – like the Nelson and Peregrino families. One of the later leaders of the community,

George Nelson (Nii Aruna I), a tailor, was able to put up the 'The First Scissors House' at Swalaba, which has become something of a palace for the Tabom chief where, for instance, the ceremonial confinement of a new chief takes place.[24]

In addition to these skills among the returnees, many had worked in Brazil on plantations, or had been involved in truck-farming around Brazilian cities and towns to survive as free Africans. Thus many arrived with farming skills. The gift of land from the chiefs of Accra enabled the farmers among them to cultivate food crops (e.g. cassava, corn), cash crops (like cashew nuts and sisal), fruit (like mangoes, coconut and pineapples) as well as beans, peppers and flowers. As Amos and Ayesu have pointed out, since the Ga of the area were mainly fisher folk, the production of such agricultural goods proved helpful to the local people and profitable for the returnees.[25]

Another important service the Brazilian returnees provided the local community was the provision of water by digging wells. The returnees came with the knowledge of well-digging and the ability to locate underground water. Thus they dug wells which provided them with water for their farms and drinking water for the community. This was no doubt an invaluable contribution to the health and well-being of the community as a whole, since the British colonial government does not appear to have paid much attention to this till later. Indeed, the first public drinking fountain was not available to the population of Accra until 1910.[26]

In religious affairs, as already noted, many, perhaps a majority of the arrivals, were Muslim. As the first Muslim residents in Accra, these Brazilian returnees helped to establish the religion in Accra and other places.[27] At the moment, very little is known about the role of the Roman Catholics among them in establishing or spreading their faith. But they must have helped to establish and spread their faith in the way their counterparts in Lagos and other places did.[28]

The most prominent characteristic of these Brazilian returnees was their level of adaptation to the Ga environment. As discussed earlier, this clearly derived from the fact that, as a group, entering a community without anybody from outside to support them (like the Black Poor in Freetown were supported by their British sponsors), they could not set up their own separate community. They had to rely on the welcome of the local people, and adapt to their ways if they were to survive. Their integration showed in different ways. Not long after they had settled down in Otublohum, the leader of the pioneer group, Kangidi Asuman, received a stool (the symbol of chiefly authority among many Ghanaian groups) from their Ga hosts. This showed that he was being recognized by the Ga as a sub-chief

(Akwashong-Tse). This leader appears to have changed his name to Azuma (Asuma) Nelson with the stool name, Nii Azumah I. His progeny have continued to hold the position and the stool name. Thus the chief of the Brazilian (or Tabom) community who formally welcomed the first Brazilian ambassador to Ghana at a reception on 13 April, 1962 was Nii Azuma III, at the time a very old man. He had earlier been recognized by the British colonial government as one of the twenty-three tribal headmen in Accra.[29] The current Tabom Mantse bears the same name, Nii Azuma V.

The integration of the Tabom community into Ga society showed even earlier, in the way they had already become recognized owners and disposers of land, and other immovable property by the 1870s. At that time some of them were selling land and buildings in central Accra and Adabraka.[30] Significantly, by 1962 they had become so integrated that only a few of them could communicate in Portuguese at the reception held for Snr. Raymundo Souza Dantas. The whole reception was carried on in Ga with translations into English by a Tabom man, Mettle Nunoo Peregrino, and then into Portuguese by the staff of the Brazilian embassy. However, some of the old women could sing some old Brazilian songs and dance to them.[31] Similarly, when the Brazilian president Inacio Lula da Silva visited the community in 2005 and 2008, the meetings were conducted in English with translation into Portuguese.

As people who had known something of Western education while in Brazil (even though few of them could have been educated by the time they arrived in Accra), these returnees knew the advantages of this education. Thus they sought to give formal education to their children whenever they had the opportunity. We know that by 1839 the Methodists already had a school in Accra and had even established a secondary school, Mfantsipim, in Cape Coast by 1876. One of the Tabom people, Francisco Ribeiro, took advantage of such schools for himself and his children. Similarly, Zaqueu Francisco Santiago Peregrino attended a school which Mama Nassu, one of the leaders of the community, had set up in his house. He sent not only his own children, but also his servants to school. The Nelson family similarly educated their children in the local elementary schools and in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and England. Both M. Francisco Ribeiro and his brother H. Francisco Ribeiro pursued further studies abroad and came back as lawyers. They practised successfully in Axim, Sekondi and Accra for many years in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Others of the community became medical doctors, military officers, Reverend Ministers, Court Registrars, and clerks in the colonial service as a result of their Western education.[32]

One Jones Nelson became the first Director-General of the Accra

Metropolitan Council in the early twentieth century. Indeed, Jones Nelson Street in Adabraka is named after him. William Lutterodt became General Manager of the post office in Accra. This William Lutterodt was the father of Mrs Georgina Wood, the present Chief Justice of Ghana. Two other Tabom men, Manyo E. Addey Plange and Henri Plange distinguished themselves in the British colonial armed forces. Manyo Plange, for instance, served the British forces as a member of the Ashanti Expedition of 1895 and in the Aro War in 1901. He so distinguished himself that the British decorated him. Henry Plange first trained as a lawyer and was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1902. He later joined the colonial forces, becoming the highest ranking African in the Gold Coast Hausa Force.[33]

In the period after independence the Tabom people distinguished themselves in the service of the country. Indeed, one of them, Miguel Augustus Francisco Ribeiro, was appointed the first ambassador of independent Ghana to the United States of America and, later, as the second Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast.[34] The family of George Nelson, the tailor (mentioned earlier), continued to practise the profession. Among these, George Aruna Nelson, the current Dean of the Tabom community, trained abroad as a tailor. On his return he trained many others, including Mr Dan Morton, founder of the tailoring establishment named after him, Dan Morton's. This has become a well-known centre for making European-style suits and other clothes. The workshop is frequented by the well-to-do and influential in Accra, who desire to have such items made for them.[35]

In the field of sports, Mr Sam Aruna Nelson distinguished himself as sports administrator of the Sports Council of Ghana, and later became deputy Minister of Youth and Sports from 1984 to 1991. The most famous of the Tabom people is the boxing legend, Samuel Azumah Nelson, who in his time held the World title in a number of divisions before he retired in 1998 at the age of 40. He was inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame in 2004. Others have distinguished themselves in the field of academics like Professor Cyril E. Fiscian, for many decades a Psychology professor at the University of Ghana, Legon, and the founding Head of the Department of Psychology at that University. His son, Dr Prempeh Fiscian, is also a distinguished scholar, a senior lecturer in Crop Science at the School of Agriculture, University of Cape Coast. Dr Aruna Morton also distinguished himself as a medical doctor and for a time was the private physician of Ghana's first president, Dr Kwame Nkrumah.[36]

In the end their early recognition of the value of formal education secured for these Afro-Brazilian returnees an important place within the emerging educated elite of coastal Ghana, out of proportion to their number.

The Brazilian returnees' place within pre-independent Ghana was thus secured by their economic contribution, their expertise applied in the physical construction of Accra, but especially by their ability to recognize and take advantage of the limited opportunities for formal education at the time for social, economic and even political advancement. This, as briefly outlined above, has continued to this day. The current Chief Justice of Ghana, Her Ladyship Mrs Georgina Wood, belongs to the Tabom community and traces her roots to the Brazil House.

An important development in recent years has been the refurbishing of the house of Mama Nassu, one of the early stone houses of the Afro-Brazilian returnees. Brazil House was adopted by UNESCO in 2001 as a place of memory. With the sponsorship of the Brazilian Embassy, and the approval and cooperation of the Otublohum Mantse and the Tabom Mantse, a restoration project was drawn up and presented to President Lula da Silva during his state visit to Ghana in 2005. He approved it and subsequently two Brazilian companies provided the funds to carry out the project. The House was formally opened in November 2007 as a place of memory especially for the Tabom people. It is a centre for the display in pictures and write-ups of the history and culture of the Afro-Brazilian returnees. It has become an important tourist destination. It stands as testimony to the fact that the Tabom community serves as an important link between Brazil and Ghana through which the South-South cooperation, often discussed in international forums, is being actualized.

ENDNOTES

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8

HISTORY OF THE TABOM, THE AFRO-BRAZILIAN COMMUNITY IN GHANA

MARCO AURELIO SCHAUMLOEFFEL

In light of of the studies by Pierre Verger, Alberto Costa e Silva, Nina Rodrigues, Milton Guran, Gilberto Freyre, J. Michael Turner, Roger Bastide, Antônio Joaquim de Macedo Soares, Zora Seljan, Marianno and Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, A. B. Laotan, J. F. de Almeida Prado, Antônio Olinto, Alcione Amos, Kristin Mann, Robin Law, amongst others, we in Brazil know about various communities of Afro-Brazilian descendants in West Africa, most of them spread through Benin, Nigeria and Togo, where they are called *agudás* or *amarôs*. Some studies estimate that in the nineteenth century approximately 10,000 former slaves returned to Africa from Brazil. Some returned voluntarily and some were deported. Throughout these countries we can find neighbourhoods, schools and museums with the name 'Brazil.' In Lagos there is a 'Brazilian Quarter' and a 'Brazilian Social Club', in Benin we can find a school called 'École Brésil.' In those countries family names like Souza, Silva, Olympio or Cardoso are common. Some of them are prominent citizens. For instance, Sylvanus Epiphanio Kwami Olympio became the first President of Togo in 1960. He was killed in 1963 during a military coup. The first *Chachá* of Benin (chief and controller of trade and relations with foreigners) was the Afro-Brazilian Francisco Félix de Souza, who became very rich due to his involvement in the slave traffic. He had 53 wives, 80 children and about 12,000 slaves. When he died, he left an empire of an estimated 120 Millions Dollars to his heirs. The royal line of the *Chachás* still exists in Togo. The first Brazilian Ambassador to Ghana (1961) was an Afro-Brazilian called Raymundo de Souza Dantas. He writes in his book *Africa difícil*, that he received a letter from a Togolese called Benedito de Souza who was alleged to be his cousin.

Unlike other countries, the only representative group of Afro-Brazilian returnees in Ghana is the community of the Tabom or Tabon. Only a few lines were dedicated to them up to now, so that their history has remained almost unknown to scholars. Portuguese-speaking people are surprised when they hear the term Tabom for the first time. Unlike *agudá* or *amarô*, the word Tabom is a direct link with the origins of the community, even though they no longer speak Portuguese. According to oral tradition, the Tabom arrived in Ghana speaking Portuguese. They used expressions such as 'Como está?' (How are you?) and the reply 'Tá bom' (I'm fine). 'Tá bom' was used by the returnees as a statement ('it's OK') and as a question.

On hearing the expression 'tá bom' so often, and initially not being able to communicate with the new arrivals, and ignorant if its meaning, the Ga started calling the group of returnees the 'Tabom.' This apellation distinguished them as a group, determining their past and origins, even though the group completely integrated with the residents of James Town in 'Old Accra'.

A possible explanation for the name of the community is given by Professor Fiscian, who is himself a Tabom, in a letter addressed to the Brazilian Embassy in Ghana on 20 May 1994. He explains that the Tabom became traders soon after their arrival in Ghana.[1] In order to sell their wares in the markets, they had to make an effort in front of the customers to show that the merchandise offered for sale were good (*ta bon*, according to him). This explanation, however, has not been confirmed, not even by the traditional Nelson family, nor can it be found in the written records. The same Professor Fiscian affirmed in interviews in 2003 and 2005 that the word originated from the greeting 'está bom.' In that case, the explanation widely accepted in the oral tradition of the Tabom is that it derived from typical Portuguese greetings ('Cê tá bom?', 'Como vai, tá bom?').

Some of the Tabom did not come to Ghana directly from Brazil, but came via Nigeria. The first group to arrive from Brazil in the Gulf of Guinea sailed in the cargo ship SS *Salisbury*, supplied by the British Government. Although there are historical records to the contrary, oral tradition has it that they arrived in Ghana as one group around 8 August 1836 from Nigeria. Although this version is consistent and emphatic, the exact date of arrival of this supposedly first single group of Tabom in Ghana is not certain. In the brochure 'Brazil House Rehabilitation', based on research and information obtained from the community, both the years 1829 and 1836 are mentioned as dates of arrival of the members of the Nelson family. Amos and Ayesu throw some light on the question. They say that there were three different groups of Afro-Brazilians who returned to Ghana. The first group would

have arrived in 1829, under the leadership of Kangidi Asuman, who later changed his name to Azumah Nelson; and the other two groups would have landed in Accra in 1836, one with about 200 people coming directly from Bahia and another coming from Brazil via Lagos, Nigeria, under the leadership of Mahama Sokoto. Besides these, the families Costa and Ribeiro arrived independently at a later stage.[2] The Morton family is said to have 'arrived one or two years later than the great group of families that had already settled'(Quarcoopome, 1970: 5). Contrary to oral tradition, and also not very clear, are records that 'Nii Azumah II, the Brazilian Chief in Otublohum, Accra, claimed that his ancestors arrived in 1829 in Accra, after the Bame war. On disembarking in 1836, he met Mantse Ankrah, chief of the Otublohum, who gave them shelter in his own suburb in Otublohum, Accra.'[3]

With regard to the group that passed through Nigeria, there is no precise information about the motive for not staying there. According to suppositions by members of the Tabom, the immigrants had vague memories of being told by their elders that their families originated from the Gold Coast. This reference may mean that their ancestors left from one of the castles or forts of Ghana, built by the slave traders – which does not mean that the slaves were from that region. Studies show that the slaves were captured in various regions of West Africa, also from deep in the interior of the continent, and brought to the coast to be sold.

In Accra the Tabom were well received and sheltered by the Ga, through the Mantse (Chief or King) Nii Ankrah of the Otublohum division, who considered them his personal guests. This warm reception encouraged them to stay.

Statements by members of the Tabom before the West African Court of Appeal, Gold Coast Session (in the National Archives of Ghana) confirm the oral tradition of more than half a century that the group of Tabom was made up of 70 to 75 Brazilians.[4] According to the Nelson family, leader of the community, this group was made up of seven different families, who bought their own freedom in Bahia, and decided to return to the Ghana of their ancestors. A future in Brazil did not appear promising due to the exploitation to which they had been subjected.

Araújo (undated: 4) made the following observations about the Afro-Brazilians in Salvador at that time,

> The slaves and liberated Africans were foreigners and prisoners of a hostile society and looked upon by the population of the country as the most fierce of the barbarians, as the slaves amongst slaves, they

> were considered at the lowest level of urban society and submitted to the most exhausting and humiliating labour ... For them, the city was their prison and to escape slavery it was imperative to leave the city or conquer it to make it into an African city.

These seven liberated families who returned to Ghana, most of them mentioned in conversation with the Tabom, were the following:[5] Azumah Nelson (the leader), Mahama Nassu[6], Vialla[7], Manuel, Zuzer[8], Gomez and Peregrino.

Though this is the oral tradition, there is insufficient evidence that all members of Tabom bought their freedom and decided to return to Africa or if some, or all, were freed workers deported after the Revolt of the Malês[9] in 1835, organized by slaves and freed ex-slaves. It is known that after that Revolt a great number of Afro-Brazilians were deported to Africa, especially those of Islamic origin, who organized the revolt. Since a large group of Tabom coincidentally arrived in Accra in 1836, coming from Bahia, and the majority practised Islam, the hypotheses of their deportation, at least of part of the group, is feasible.[10] These facts also raise the possibility that Tabom groups that practised Islam, or some of them, were of Hausa origin.[11]

With the passing of time these seven families, who came from Brazil, multiplied and allegedly formed new families.[12] According to them, all persons who bear today the surnames of Vialla, Gomez, Maslieno[13], Massino, Johsah, Nelson, Adama, Abu, Manuel, Zuzer, Sokoto, Azumah[14], Peregrino, ad Ricga, Tintingi, Codjoe, Costa, Matta, Kofi, Bossman[15], Martin, Domingo, Lawrence, Ribeiro, Pedro, Morton, Aruna, Marcolino, Nassu, Aliptara and Fiscian are undoubtedly of Tabom origin. The Fiscian family was derived from the Aruna family. (Quarcoopome, 1970: 4)

At present, the majority of Tabom believe that there was only one leader of the group at the time of their arrival in Ghana, Nii Azumah Nelson. Some people say that there were two or even three leaders when the Tabom arrived, the second being Mahama Sokoto[16] and the third Mahama Nassu. The latter is alleged to have been the flag bearer of the group and not its leader, according to one of his descendants, W. L. Lutterodt, the person currently responsible for matters concerning the Brazil House. Mahama Sokoto would have been the spiritual leader and the negotiator with the Ga Chiefs for arable land of the Otublohum division (Amos & Ayesu, 2002: 43).[17] The existence of three Tabom leaders seems plausible, given the fact that three different groups of Afro-Brazilians arrived in Ghana. In spite of that, historically, the Nelsons' stand out in the leadership of the community,

which was only consolidated after the Tabom came to live in Ghana and were identified as a community of Afro-Brazilian returnees.

One of the first photographic records of the Tabom. Nii Alasah (the Brazilian João Antônio Nelson, later Nii Azumah II), on the extreme left with the Paramount Chief of the Ga Nation, Ga Mantse Nii Tackie Tawiah, and other Chiefs of clans.

Since the effective settlement of the Tabom in Ghana as a community of returnees coming from Brazil until the present day, there were six chiefs. (See p. 116). Five of them had the honorary title of Nii Azumah, obviously as homage to the Brazilian immigrant Azumah Nelson, who was Nii Azumah I. He preceded them as headman, fulfilling the function of Chief of the Tabom from their arrival on the African Continent until about 1865.

From 1981 to 1998, there was a long transitional period in which an interim chief took over the role as Tabom Mantse. The dates between the time of the death of Nii Azumah I and the installation of Nii Aruna I are not precise since there are no written records, and the dates are based on an estimate of the Tabom elders.

The Tabom landed with a reasonable quantity of possessions and many skills learned in Brazil, skills that were needed by the Ga. They knew irrigation techniques; how to find the best location for digging wells; they were shoemakers; they were also skilled in carpentry; architecture; metal forging, especially precious metals; tailoring; and were also experienced

farmers. The Tabom boast these skills even today. In 1961, Reverend C.K. Nelson wrote that 'some houses that the Brazilians built in Accra are still standing, are perfect or in very good shape, and some of them till recently served as residences (palaces) to some clan Chiefs of Accra. They were (the Tabom) in truth our first great architects and were also excellent tailors. To this day in Accra they are traditionally respected as cutters and their wives excellent dressmakers.'(Dantas, 1965: 46)

Noting that they were ambitious and enterprising, the Mantse Nii Kwaku Ankrah had no objections to their permanence in his territory. However, the Dutch commander of the area, Christian Ernst Lars, had doubts, initially against the presence of the Brazilians but accepting them at a later stage.[18] Nii Ankrah saw in them a great opportunity to improve the quality of life of his people. The Tabom in that era were an interesting addition to the Ga clan, who were basically fishermen.

But the warm reception given by Nii Ankrah to the Afro-Brazilians was probably not only related to their skills and their enterprising nature. Amos and Ayesu state that 'the cordial relations that developed between the Afro-Brazilians in Dutch Accra apparently were due to a combination of factors' (Amos and Ayesu, 2002: 41). The authors speculate on the possibility that Ankrah had personal interests, as he had a son called Antonio and a nephew called Pedro, an indication that Ankrahs married Tabom women, or at least had children by them. In the position of Otublohum Chief, Nii Ankrah was the broker for the Dutch and the biggest slave trader in the area. To fulfill this nefarious function, he apparently also recruited Afro-Brazilians as slave traders. In a report of 1845, the Danish governor of the Christianborg Castle, Edward Carstensens, writes that 'Dutch Accra has for some time been the centre for slave traders, especially emigrant Brazilian Negroes' (Amos and Ayesu, 2002: 41), relating also that Brazilian traders were arrested in the interior of the country in possession of slaves. Furthermore, Amos and Ayesu say that 'almost twenty years later, in 1864, it was still reported that the Afro-Brazilians were controlling 'a flourishing trade in slaves' which were sold as farm workers' (Amos and Ayesu, 2002: 42). The Tabom themselves had slaves in their houses and for the purpose of agriculture, a common fact for the times.[19] It is improbable that the objections of the Dutch Commander Christian Ernst Lars, with regard to the settling of a second group of Afro-Brazilians in 1836, were linked to the involvement of the Tabom with the traffic, as he probably also had an interest in the traffic. The more likely reason for his objections might have been that he had information that the group arriving in Accra had been expelled from Brazil for plotting a revolt.

The most important indication that the Tabom were welcome in the Otublohum division was the donation, by the Ga people, of extensive tracts of land a few years after the arrival of the Brazilians. The Tabom landed on a beach close to Ussher fort, in Old Accra, part of the District Ashiedu Keteke, in the Otublohum division. They were able to establish themselves very close to that area. Historian Samuel Quarcoopome (1970:7) described the relatively small area occupied originally by the Tabom thus:

> If one stands in front of the Ussher Fort Prisons and examines the area where the Brazilian Community stayed then the southern part is bounded by the High Street, the northern part by the Salaga Street, the eastern part by the Onamroko Street and the western part by Tackie Tawiah Street.

He continues:

> A few years' stay in what might be termed this 'concentrated area' created problems of its own. Members of the Aruna family and Mahama Nassau family were by and large farmers. Being restricted in this area did not seem to have served their best interests. There was a population explosion problem with its attendant ills. The Accra chiefs and the Ga Mantse were greatly disturbed by the plight of the Brazilians and they resolved to ameliorate their conditions.' (Quarcoopome, 1970:7)

This happened through the donation of land which probably 'followed the rituals prescribed by the Ga traditional belief that 'the ultimate owners of their lands are the gods'. Even though the gods owned the land, rights for its use could be given to strangers, such as the Tabom.' (Amos and Ayesu, 2002:44) It would have been under this tradition that the spiritual leader, Mahama Sokoto, approached the Ga elders for 'the performance of the necessary ritual, which ... [involved] provision of drinks for the pouring of libation to the gods and the ancestors, the payment of a token fee ... and the slaughter of a sheep', receiving in this manner the land to which they aspired.[20]

The land was located in what are today very well known neighbourhoods: Tudu,[21] Adabraka, the entire area of Asylum Down up to Ring Road Central; the area adjoining the central train station; and the area surrounding Accra Breweries. This occurred after Chief Nii Mantse Ankrah, of the Dadeban Section of Otobluhum, had introduced and recommended the Tabom to the Chief responsible for the whole Ga area, the paramount

chief, the Ga Mantse Nii Tackie Tawiah, who was very generous in the land donations. On that land, the Tabom immediately began planting cassava, beans, pineapple, bananas, maize, cashew, pepper, flowers, mangoes, medicinal herbs, Bahian coconut, and millet, amongst others. They built an irrigation system. Henry Azumah Kwaku Nelson, born on 11 November, 1883, who became a tailor, was the son of George Aruna Nelson, Nii Azumah II, second Chief of the Tabom community. In a statement to the court to resolve a land dispute on 16 November 1945, he revealed that his father ploughed the land and planted cassava and cashew between the Ankwandor and Fanofa valleys. The wife of George Aruna Nelson, Helen Ashong Nelson, also remembered that during the rainy season he used to plant maize. Henry Azumah Kwaku Nelson mentioned that the Fiscian family, also of Brazilian origin, planted sisal in the portion of land designated to them.

Furthermore, he also states that the place in question was reserved for agriculture, and was not inhabited until 1890. The land received from the Ga was not the private property of any Brazilian, but was communal land, administered by the Tabom Chief. It could be used by all, even though each family was allocated a specific area for cultivation. If someone wanted to build on the land or even sell the portion allocated to him, it was necessary to obtain the Chief's consent. During the 1890s all the Brazilian descendants lived in Ankwandor; Ga name for the area. The Tabom called the same area Amusudai. Today this area is part of the Adabraka estate, which has a street called Amusudai.

The childhood reminiscences of the present Tabom Chief, Nii Azumah V, include excursions to the area that they called the Mango Line at the time, a reference to the mango trees there. This area is located between the Holy Spirit Cathedral and Asylum Down. Some of those trees are still there, even in urbanized Accra, and are silent witnesses to the Tabom presence in the city. In the present Estate of North Ridge, one of the areas of the Mango Line, there is a *Tabon Street*, homage to the community and their plantations.

In conversations with members of the Tabom clan, they often said that they were well regarded by the Ga as they helped significantly to improve the general sanitary conditions. No one could give details of this contribution. A judgment on 15 February 1938 in a land dispute between two Tabom, Messrs J. E. Maslieno and J. A. Nelson, with the verdict given by Chief Kojo Ababio IV, Mantse of Ngleshi, assisted by the notary B. Francisco Ribeiro, another Tabom, sheds light on the subject.[22] In the verdict there is a reference to a member of the Sokoto family who had requested, soon after arriving from Brazil, that Mantse Ankrah, Chief of Otubluhun, ask the Ga for a portion of land to enable the Brazilians to dig wells for fresh water, as many people were

dying of dysentery as a result of the water they were obliged to drink. The request was granted and the Brazilians started to dig wells and find water. As a result the place became known by the Tabom as Mungatabu, which can be interpreted to mean 'we found water.' Today, Mugatabu is known as Anetebu or Angetebu. In a visit to Carola Nelson, eldest daughter of Edward Pedu Nelson, the fourth Chief of the Tabom, Nii Azumah III, she confirmed the story. Carola Nelson currently lives in a street called Angetebu Street, in a compound next to the house where E.P. Nelson, Nii Azumah IV lived. This street passes through the estates of Adabraka and Asylum Down, and is located close to Jones Nelson Road and Amusudai Street, all proof of the strong presence of the Tabom in the area.

Another skill of the Tabom was house building. An elder of Brazil House states that she heard mention, from her grandparents, that the first houses of a strong structure built of stone, usually multi-storeyed and with arches at the entrances (unlike any other houses in Old Accra) were the work of the Brazilians.

Furthermore, tailoring and dressmaking skills brought from Brazil by the Tabom was also much appreciated by the Ga. Even today the Tabom tailors are very well known. The tailor, Dan Morton, is the synthesis of the present history of tailoring amongst the Tabom. Famous at home and abroad, he was apprenticed to master George Aruna Nelson, master tailor of the Ghanaian army, recruited by President Nkrumah soon after the independence of Ghana. The Nelsons have a great tailoring tradition, evident from the history of First Scissors House – the first tailor shop in the country. It supplied the Ghanaian Army with uniforms in 1854, during the time of Chief Nii Aruna I.

In addition to all these contributions, they also influenced the religious life of the community, helping in the establishment of the Islamic religion on the coast of Ghana and the preservation of some African religions which they had modified in Brazil, like the Shango. Today the Tabom have completely integrated into Ghanaian society, and are a part of the Otublohum Section of the Ga People.

BRAZIL HOUSE

The History of Brazil House is closely related to the History of the Tabom People. Along with the *First Scissors House*, it is the biggest structure commemorating the history of the Tabom People in Ghana. This is evident from its privileged location, in Brazil Lane of Old Accra, facing the sea, right in front of the old port, and, for years, the gate to the rest of the world.

A chat with Mr W. L. Lutterodt, a Tabom Senior and the accredited

head of the Mamah Nassu family, with authority to represent the family in all matters pertaining to Brazil House, reveals a lot of its History.

When Mamah Nassu arrived with six other families in 1836 from Brazil, he was the flag bearer of the clan. He bought land in Brazil Lane and built a house there for his family. He was married to Naa Supiana and had a daughter called Naa Chercher, who later married a royal from the Nii Oto Din family of Otublohum. This marriage is a clear sign that the Tabom People were welcomed and accepted in the Ga State. Naa Chercher had four children: Okanta Acquah, Kofi Acquah, Florence Acquah and Mary Acquah. Her son, Kofi Acquah, became a professional cook. He went to Warri in Nigeria and worked there for some years. On his return to the Gold Coast, he demolished the old family home built by Nii Mama Nassu and built the existing two storey house as a family home for himself and his sisters.

For many years the late Kofi Acquah leased the house to various European businessmen. One of these companies built a warehouse on the land.

From 1942, however, the house was no longer rented out and the family went to live there. The warehouse was converted into dwellings and let out to outsiders. A few direct descendants of Kofi Acquah still live in the house.

Brazil House fell into a state of disrepair and the Brazilian Government, together with UNESCO and the Tabom People, decided to restore it. The Government of Ghana also supported the project in the 'Old Accra Integrated Urban Development and Conservation Framework.'

Brazil House will serve as a cultural space where Brazil and the Brazilian community of Ghana will be able to interact with the Tabom People, and the general public. It will serve as the Official Hall of the Tabom Mantse. Most of the people currently living on the premises will remain, and their dwellings will be refurbished in the context of the project.

The Tabom Mantse's Official Hall will highlight the Brazilian roots of the Tabom People by establishing a documentation centre, and an exhibition space where the Tabom will have a chance to learn more about their History and its links to Brazil.

During a visit to Ghana and the Tabom in April 2005 by Mr Lula da Silva, President of the Federal Republic of Brazil, he announced a donation to the Tabom foundation for the restoration of the Brazil House. It was a great step by Brazil in supporting the Tabom People in their efforts to have a cultural centre that preserves their History. The private sector, Coral Paints (M&K Ghana) and the Brazilian construction company Camargo Corrêa, also donated money to the foundation. The restoration project was completed in November 2007, when Brazil House was inaugurated.

Historical moment for the Tabom: Nii Azumah V, accompanied by his delegation, welcomes President Lula da Silva at the Accra Airport on the 12 April 2005. On the left of President Lula stands the President of Ghana, J. Kufuor (Picture courtesy of Ricardo Stuckert)

ENDNOTES

1. This information seems very generalized. It is known from written records, based on statements before the court of the former Gold Coast, by Tabom members born in the nineteenth century, that they practised many other professions soon after arrival. The main one seemed to have been that of farming, as explained throughout this work.
2. As per Amos and Ayesu (2002: 39-40). We could not confirm the exact date (or dates) of the arrival of the Tabom. The fact that more than 200 Afro-Brazilians came to Ghana, contrary to oral tradition – 70 people of 7 different families – seems to make more sense, as today there are nearly 30 surnames, claiming to be of Tabom origin. The records presented by Amos & Ayesu (a Dutch 'Journaal' and a letter of that time) are conflicting. While the letter refers to 20 freed returnees, the 'journal' cites 200.
3. The law suit M.D.A. Ankrah versus Nii Aponsah II, dated 24 March 1941. This apparently illogical statement, recorded in the Tribunal of the Gold Coast, 'arrived in 1829 … disembarked in 1836', can be understood to mean that more than one group arrived. Oral tradition, with the passing of time, tends to 'reduce' information, making it imprecise.
4. According to the statement given by Henry Azumah Kwaku Nelson, on the 16.11.1945.
5. Also cited by Professor Fiscian in the letter dated 20 May 1994, referred to earlier, and by various Tabom, even by those bearing different surnames to the ones mentioned below.
6. There are some records where the name appears as 'Nassau', we use only Nassu as it is more frequently used, even though its origin may have been 'Nassau.' Mr Lutterodt, descendant of the Nassu thinks that there was an 'adaptation' of the name in Ghana, referring to various other names that were modified through phonetic influence of local languages. The same phenomenon happens in Brazil, where the German surname 'Müller', for instance, becomes 'Mueller', 'Muller' or even 'Miller.'
7. Sometimes appearing as 'Viala', 'Viara', probably a corruption of 'Vieira.'
8. The sound of this name gives the impression that it derives from 'Souza', which underwent phonetic and written modifications with the interference of the languages spoken in Ghana.
9. Pierre Verger (1987) stated that this revolt was organized by emancipated Africans and slaves, who originated mainly from West Africa: 'Of the 286 accused there were 194 Nagos, 24 Hausas, 6 Tapas, 7 Minas, 9 Ewes (...) only 7 of them originated from regions in Africa south of the Equator and 3 were mulattos.' (page 343)

10. According to Ahmed-Rufai (2002: 104), there was at least one deportee amongst the Tabom, namely Mammon Peregrino.
11. For further information of the Hausa ethnic group, see Costa e Silva (1996:431-448). Amos & Ayesu (2002: 38) also speculate on this possibility. Later, on analysing the 'Brazilian' heritage of the Tabom, we would come back to this subject.
12. Here, once more, it is possible to observe the contradiction between the oral tradition of the Tabom and the records. Certainly the group was composed of more than 7 families. Their explanation that with the growing number of members, they adopted other 'Brazilian' names, increasing therefore the number of surnames, seems possible, but not probable.
13. Probably a corruption of the name 'Marcelino' or 'Marciliano', in some instances it also appears as 'Marselieno' or 'Maslino.'
14. This name also appears as 'Asuman', 'Asuma', 'Azuma' and 'Asumah'
15. Although this surname is not 'originally' a Tabom surname, it has become part of the community inter-marriage. The Bossman family is also qualified to provide the community with a Queen Mother.
16. Mahama Sokoto does not appear in the list of seven families, always referred to as 'original', which meets the explanations given by Amos & Ayesu (2002:30-40), of the existence of three different groups of immigrants. The name 'Mahama' is sometimes also recorded as 'Mama' or 'Mamah.' Both are probably a corruption of 'Mohammed.'
17. In Dantas (1965:46) the Reverend G.K. Nelson also confirmed that Sokoto was the leader of the community.
18. As per Amos and Ayesu (2002: 40). The Dutch commander Christian Ernst Lars wrote this information in a letter to Ankrah, dated 16.08.1836, and in his official log.
19. As per appendix 2 *in* Amos & Ayesu (2002: 58). This appendix is a table with 18 names of slaves belonging to Mahama Nassu (6), Malam Aruna (11) and José Viera (1).
20. Quarcoopome, Samuel S. 'The impact of urbanization on the socio-political history of the Ga Mashie people of Accra: 1877 – 1957.' *in* Amos & Ayesu (2002: 44).
21. It is curious that one of the great commercial areas of Accra is still called Tudu today. It was established as a commercial estate by a few Portuguese traders in the beginning of the twentieth century. In compeititon with the central market of Accra (known as the Makola Market), they claimed that only in their shops, all located in the same area, it was possible to find 'tudu' (from the Portuguese 'everything'), including rare imported goods. Today, Tudu, after having been dominated by Syrians and Lebanese for a few years,

is in the hands of Ghanaian and Chinese traders. Apart from the name, there is no other reminder of the Portuguese presence.

22. This judgement is a part of the attachments of an appeal made in 1945 (see bibliography). The document is an authenticated copy, done on 15 February 1938 by the Registrar B. Francisco Ribeiro.

9

A ABENTURA DA CASA BRASIL: A HISTORY OF THE TABOM PEOPLE, PART I[1]

KWAME ESSIEN

INTRODUCTION

The dawn of the nineteenth century gave rise to a mass exodus of Afro-Brazilian slaves. Most of the slaves who returned to Africa were deported after slave rebellions.[2] Others returned to Africa on their own and settled in Nigeria, Togo, Benin and other parts of West Africa.[3] A small fraction of the returnees made the Gold Coast their home after 1829.[4] The current dialogue taking place in Ghana between people of Afro-Brazilian descent (the Tabom people), the South American nation of Brazil (where their forebears once lived as slaves), and the Ghanaian government, has carved new channels for reconciling historical links.

The epigraph shows the various ways in which the Tabom people recreated their identity and negotiated space and power. It also underscores the notion of a return either from Brazil, or to Brazil. This aspect of Afro-Brazilian history has gained considerable attention culturally, socially and economically with the aid of the Brazilian Embassy in Ghana. The Brazilian Embassy in Ghana has facilitated this ground-breaking process through educational programmes in the Tabom communities, by restoring relevant cultural sites such as buildings and streets, and by highlighting the contributions of freed slaves to Ghana.

To strengthen ties, the Brazilian government has funded a Brazilian lecturer for the study of Portuguese both in the Tabom community and The Ghana Institute of Languages.[5] Additionally, the Brazilian Embassy, which acts as a bridge between the Tabom people and Brazil, has created a study abroad programme sponsoring Ghanaian students who wish to study in Brazil. These trends suggest that there has been continuity and a positive relationship between the Tabom community, and Brazil. We

would like to examine the factors that sustained the relationship between these two countries after the transatlantic slave trade was ended, and the implications for the study of the African Diaspora.

The relationship evolved in a number of ways. The first phase was a reverse migration to Brazil by the first generation descendents of slaves who settled along the coastline. The second phase occurred when Brazilian President Janio Quadros (1961) appointed Raymond Sousa Danta as the first Black Brazilian Ambassador to Ghana in 1961.[6] This paved the way for contemporary relations between the Tabom people and Brazil.

The political space carved out five decades ago has been reinforced by the first visit of President Lula da Silva, who took the bold initiative to visit the Tabom people in Ghana in April, 2005[7] after the opening of Brazil House, the 'cradle of the Tabom People.' The fledgling relationship provides fertile ground for exploring other questions relating to reverse diasporas and the reconstruction of historical landmarks in the Tabom community.

A abertura da casa Brasil, the opening of Brazil House, shows multiple layers of meaning in the Tabom account. On the one hand, it is seen as a turning point in Tabom history, because it preserves another aspect of Afro-Brazilian history in Africa beside Benin, Togo and Nigeria. It also serves as a symbol of unity for the community. Indeed, it has economic symbolism and forms a core component of transformation in the community. It also marks other important milestones in the history of the transatlantic slave trade. The edifice is evocative of oppression in the plantations of Brazil, survival, resilience and success at the beginning of the twenty first century.

For the older members of the Tabom community, especially for 91-year-old George Aruna Nelson – one of the elders of the community and a brother of the current *Mantse* (chief) Nii Azumah V – the opening of Brazil House was the culmination of years of campaigning to raise awareness of historical landmarks in their Afro-Brazilian ancestry. It epitomizes the connection between the past, the present and the future. A trip to Brazil, Nelson says, would complete the history of his forebears, passed on to him through oral tradition.[8]

EXISTING LITERATURE AND THEORY

A number of studies have been done on the history of Afro-Brazilians in Africa, especially West Africa. These trace the history of African Americans and Caribbeans in Ghana. They include Samuel Quarcoopome; Michael J. Turner; S.Y. Boadi Siaw; Robin Law; Kristin Mann; Alcione

Amos and Ebenezer Ayesu; and José C. Curto and Paul Lovejoy. Whereas Quarcoopome, Siaw, Amos and Ayesu concentrate on the Tabom history, the others concentrate on Afro-Brazilian communities in Benin, Togo and Nigeria. The narratives by these scholars underscore themes of identity, ethnicity, agency, contributions by returnees to local cultures and a yearning for a return. The issues they bring to the forefront include competition for space and power; ethnic tensions; and the ways in which returnees and their descendants assimilated into local African cultures.[9] The central arguments they examine in these historiographical traditions have surfaced in a number of debates and discourses.

Ongoing academic debates suggest that there is a paradigm shift in the definition of the African Diaspora. The Diaspora is being re-examined to place New World dispersions in perspective, and to analyze the concept of Global Africa and the Black Atlantic.[10] This trend in academia show that scholars interested in the Diaspora wish to interrogate discourses that confine the concept within a traditional framework – one that determines who should or should not be included in the definition of African Diaspora. Attempts to redefine old definitions of the African Diaspora, which are mostly centred on Blackness and Anglophone models, remains a subject of contention among many scholars.[11]

Other academic investigations probe the meaning of history; how some historical narratives are configured, the production of knowledge and its methodological underpinnings, and, most significantly, how some historical voices are silenced and systematically erased to illuminate other paradigms.[12] Tiffany Patterson and Robin Kelley also argue for continuity and suggest new models for unearthing the processes (events that led to the movements of Black communities) and conditions (socio-political and cultural factors that determine citizenship) within the African Diaspora.[13]

There are other works that follow a similar path. Historian Kim D. Butler states that the Diaspora should be viewed as 'a framework for the study of a specific process of community formation.'[14] In her assessment of the African Diaspora, Butler identifies multiple and overlapping factors in the Diaspora which include: reasons for and conditions of the dispersal, relationship with the homeland, relationship with hostlands, inter-relationships within communities of the Diaspora and comparative studies of different Diasporas.

First, by framing this paper around the concept of reverse migration – based on efforts by the Tabom people in Ghana and other descendants of slaves in West Africa to return to Brazil, I will attempt to show that the Tabom people's image of Brazil embodies complex migration patterns

and links between Africa and the New World. The journey to Brazil is part of what Paul T. Zeleza calls 'multiple belongings.'[15] Secondly, this paper will show that attempts by the Tabom people to reconnect with Brazil are influenced by economic concerns. It argues that the Tabom people are not only interested in establishing cultural ties with Brazil, but are using strategic identification for material purposes. Thirdly, the growing phenomenon of reverse migration epitomizes an important element in the Tabom community, as descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves continue to create a platform for their history. Hence, the paper seeks to examine the different ways in which the Tabom people experience their identity through tourism, as they aspire to open their community to the tourist industry in Ghana.

Paula A. Ebron, Saidiya V. Hartman and, more recently, Bayo Holsey rightly point out how tourist attractions and historical monuments in Ghana have been transformed for cultural and economic gains by competing for space and impact at sites of slavery.[16] In my attempt to trace the journey to Brazil, I am not suggesting that the Tabom people are demanding Brazilian citizenship or are ready to give up their Ghanaian citizenship. Rather, I argue that they are reacting to decades of institutional neglect of their community, and their history with the transatlantic slave trade. The Ghana Tourist and Monuments Board has a one-dimensional focus on various historical landmarks, especially Elmina and the Cape Coast castles, to raise revenue for the government and jobs for the local communities in these areas.

The Tabom people's participation in the commercialization of their African and Brazilian heritage, accumulating revenue from historical sites in their community, is not a new phenomenon, but part of a growing trend in Ghana. In fact, what we are witnessing within the Tabom community today is another transnational discourse to enhance Black Diaspora tourism. Furthermore, another objective of this paper is to show how historical memory has driven descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves to create routes between a homeland (Ghana) and a hostland, (Brazil). What constitutes diaspora, heritage and culture? In other words, how do Ghanaians appropriate the concept of diaspora, pilgrimage and a 'return' to the homeland for their own benefit? To understand other dynamics now taking place in the Tabom community, other theories need to be investigated.

In *Performing Africa*, Paula A. Ebron explores how performance evolves into enactment. According to Ebron, performance is multifaceted. In formal and informal settings, performance surfaces as artists perform for the audience, and on another spectrum. As such, Ebron theorizes that performance frames Africa and its history as 'flexible objects' for both

local and foreign appropriation.[17] Katharina Schramm also posits that performance of African heritage by the Ghana Tourist and Monument Boards, and others, who benefit from tourism especially during the annual Emancipation Day Celebration in Ghana, creates an atmosphere that influences pilgrims to act as tourists, as they race with visitors in the country by collecting numerous souvenirs as they travel. Furthermore, she criticizes annual performances and enactments of slavery in Ghana that do not highlight the role of Ghanaian chiefs in the enslavement of Africans.[18] Ghana is not the only site for performance. In Benin, there is growing awareness about the significance of African heritage in tourism. This has led to the annual enactments and performances of African cultures, especially during Vodum Whydah Festivals.[19] Economically, the Tabom people follow the example of other groups in Ghana who have benefited immensely from revenue through tourism. The growing interactions and awareness of their ancestral connection to Brazil is mainly influenced by their desire to enrich the community through tourism. This paper will explore how the Tabom people use different occasions to perform their identity, why the Tabom communities are influenced by the rising capitalist ventures in Ghana's tourist industry, and how they are aided by the Brazilian Embassy in Ghana.

In the context of this paper, identity will be employed to describe the overlapping consciousness; the constant ideological shift within the Tabom community; and the avenues they employ to perform their identity. Borrowing from Samiri Hernandez Hiraldo's claims that identity is embedded in a dynamic map of power, I will show how the Tabom people are adopting a strategic identification approach that gives them the fluidity to determine when they want to be identified as Ghanaians, and when they can claim their Brazilian ancestry simultaneously through their performances. Also, leaning on Hernandez's theory of managing identities in her study of the Loizan community, a marginalized African community in Puerto Rico, and Paula A. Ebron's notion of performing and enacting of African cultures,[20] I argue that descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves in Ghana are also managing, negotiating, and performing their identity, cultures and history tactically in order to benefit from growing wealth and revenues that have been generated through tourism in Ghana.

INTERCHANGEABLE AND IDENTITY PERFORMANCES IN THE TABOM COMMUNITY

In *Black Puerto Rican Identity and Religious Experiences,* Samiri Hernandez Hiraldo examines the history of the Loizan people, an African slave

settlement near San Juan, Puerto Rico. In so doing, Hernandez argues that different marginalized communities often intentionally and unintentionally regulate their conditions, to arrange their community and channel their identity and human experiences in diverse historical relations within a particular space and time. This could be to satisfy either socio-political or economic objectives, or both. According to Hernandez, tactical control of identity appears in multiple interchangeable ways. To put it in another way, Hernandez contends that identity can be manipulated. She writes, 'management, whether conscious or not – strategically employs an intricate net of relations between diverse identities and competing socio-economic, political, and religious agendas.'[21] If identity can be interchangeable and be consciously and unconsciously regulated, then, is it possible to trace similar patterns in the Tabom community? I argue there is a noticeable connection between her work and what is unraveling in the Tabom community. From another angle, Hernandez provides a premise for the story of descendants of Afro-Brazilians in Ghana. Their selective performances and their multifaceted personalities are shown in the following interview.

Kwame Essien (KE): Concerning the issue of identity, we know that Tabom people have been in Ghana for a number of years. So the question is that, with which group do Tabom people identify?

Nii Azumah V (NAV): As now, we identify with *Ga's* [the ethnic group that welcomed the first generation of Afro-Brazilian returnees], but that does not mean that we have lost our identity. We still maintain our identity. We have the names. I am called Haruna. We keep. We learn to keep our identity. When we came we still maintained our identity. Despite the fact that we are *Ga's* we still maintain our identity. When they came [first generation], they came with Muslim names. People want to know how you can have Christian and Muslim names. Could you believe that the Anglican Bishop of Accra sometime ago was of Afro-Brazilian descent?

KE: So, are you Ghanaians now or Brazilians?

NAV: If they are in Ghana they are Ghanaians. They [Tabom people] are more or less Ghanaians by history.

As demonstrated in the interview, the Tabom people are self-defined as descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves. Nonetheless, we see that their interactions with and immersion into Ghanaian cultures, as well as their attitude to their Brazilian ancestry is complex. The position of this community, especially the dialogue or conversation in this paper and others, shows how they negotiate their identity, space and power. Based on the historical circumstance of the Tabom people, it will be misleading to suggest, or assume, that they are a homogenous community. In other words, the Tabom people simultaneously and zealously claim both a Ghanaian identity and a Brazilian ancestral connection: born Ghanaians, they demand a relationship with Brazil at the same time; consumed by Ghanaian values and culture, they nonetheless tirelessly incorporate memories of a Brazilian past. They have perhaps settled in Otoblohum in Accra, but continue to daydream about ancestral roots in Salvador, in Bahia, Brazil. How do the 'push and pull' factors previously described contribute to the notion of a return to Brazil?

As this paper shows, descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves continue to enjoy a 'taste of two worlds': Ghana and Brazil. At a local level, President Lula da Silva's visit to Ghana in 2005, as well as the programmes and festivities that were organized to allow 'Lula' to interact with the Tabom community, published on the Embassy's website, falls under Ebron's definition of performance. Sometimes these practices surface among other parties with a vested interest in Tabom history.

An emerging feature worth mentioning here is the way the Tabom youth, the 'gatekeepers,' are making their presence known in the community through performance. For example, during my earlier visit to the area several young people approached me demanding money before I could take photographs. Although I was accompanied by Nii Azumah's 'servant' and am fluent in the *Ga* language, the main Ghanaian language spoken by the Tabom community, it took longer than expected to accomplish my goals that day. My recent visit to Swalaba, in the summer of 2008, two years later, was no different in terms of interruption and interrogations by the youth who live around the Tabom compound. Nonetheless, the Tabom people continue to receive visitors from the Embassy, in addition to tourists who patronize Brazil House.

Despite the harassment, other members of the community see such visits as an opportunity for disseminating information about the 'hidden treasures' of the Tabom people at the First Scissors House, a location believed to have been inhabited by Afro-Brazilian returnees who were experts in tailoring or dressmaking. At the *First Scissor's House* they carry

on traditions of cloth-making, encourage visits and provide hospitality for tourist and visitors. During my visit, they requested that I take a photograph to show the 'world' how they have carried on the skills of their ancestors. Clearly, the Tabom people are performing and enacting their culture, and contesting for space and power whenever they see 'strangers' in their compound, where most of them live temporarily or permanently for economic gain, and for attention.

Another way in which the Tabom people exercise their identity is through sports. Engagements between the Tabom people, the Brazilian Embassy and the Ghanaian government took an interesting twist during the 2006 World Cup Soccer tournament in Germany, when the Ghanaian national team, the Black Stars, played against Brazil in the elimination stage. Brazilian media outlets discussed the interesting connection between Brazil and Ghana, based on slavery and a complex Afro-Brazilian history.[22]

In the past, Ghanaians were known for supporting the Brazilian national soccer team because of 'Pele,' the legendary Afro-Brazilian player whose soccer skills so influenced soccer in Ghana, and indeed around the world. Moreover, the Ghana Black Stars are referred to as the 'Brazil of Africa,' due largely to their imitation of Brazilian soccer skills. The story was nonetheless quite different when Ghana had to play Brazil in the elimination stage – the vast majority of Ghanaians showed their support for the Black Stars, but the Tabom people had a decision to make; a dual identity to embrace. The question thus reads: which side did the Tabom people support, or did they embrace both sides?

According to Nii Azumah V, he and other members of the community were 'torn' between the two nations. He added that several newspaper reporters interviewed them about the significance of the soccer game. Nii Azumah V put it this way, 'Born, bred and educated in Ghana all my life, my mind is on Brazil but my heart is in Ghana.'[23] Nii Azumah's use of two symbolic parts of the human body cements the complex ways in which the descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves perform and negotiate their identity. The description of the 'tension' articulated by the chief, is the idea that there is a multiple identity in the community – one that is torn between the mind, a distant hostland in Brazil; and the heart, their birth place in Ghana.

What the Tabom leader is implying is that he cannot divorce his imagined place of origin and the location from which his generation emerged. There are other arenas that provide ample space for the Tabom people to refashion or perform their identities – through economics and tourism, for instance.

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African cultures sell mainly because of the growing desire of people of African descent to re-enact and display their heritage openly in order to raise Black consciousness and racial/ethnic pride in their communities. To put it another way, 'pilgrimage [and routine visits by Diasporan Blacks to Ghana] is taken up by the Ghanaian tourism industry and turned into a commercial enterprise.'[24] Other scholars characterize the changes in Ghana and other parts of Africa as 'the production of Africa through the practices of tour guides, corporate sponsors, tourists and local entrepreneurs.'[25] Sandra L. Richards' experiences and observations, after visiting Ghana's slave castle-dungeons, show that 'memory is constructed through processes of selecting, repeating, forgetting – willfully as well as unconsciously.'[26]

Are the memories of Ghanaians and Blacks in the Diaspora, especially those of African American tourists and pilgrims, grounded on the same concept of a return to the motherland, or what Sandra Richards characterizes as the trauma of slavery? Richards claims that a return fulfills some aspects of cultural desires, as well as the memories of visitors and pilgrims of African ancestry. At the same time, they serve as an impetus for enhancing other economic enterprises that depend on the historical monuments on the local level as a source of revenue.[27] In order to fully appreciate performances of diaspora, heritage and culture in Ghana, it is vital to explore enactments that take place when 'returnees,' tourists, pilgrims and Ghanaians, tour guides, tourist agents, church organizations, street vendors who sell souvenirs, government officials, public school students and foreign organizations congregate at the Elmina and Cape Coast castle.

Richards' work informs us about challenges the pilgrims and tourists from the African Diaspora have had to endure as they negotiate, contest and perform multiple roles as spectators. They have done so by strategically choosing what to remember about the horrors their ancestors experienced at the dungeons. As actors, they moved through historical space at the dungeons by following the narratives of the tour guides, who mostly directed the story of slavery through their narratives.[28]

According to Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblet, tourism and heritage have become part of a performance that is invented by local people, for foreigners embarking on a pilgrimage or a visit to historical sites. In the context of tourism in Ghana, Richards explores the ways in which Ghanaians strategically select historical memories in order to meet their economic goals.[29] Richards attributes performance to the distribution of

tourist brochures, the role of Web media and the arrangement of historical monuments and space as a display for the tourists. Katharina Schramm, on the other hand, explores two opposing groups: pilgrims (diasporan Blacks who explore Africa in search of a spiritual, ancestral connection), and tourists to the 'motherland.' Pilgrims, she claims, often misplace their purpose for embarking on the journey and sometimes perform multiple roles.

Why has Ghana become one of the key centres for tourism in West Africa? For many Blacks in the Diaspora Ghana's history with transatlantic slavery offers plenty of reasons for exploring ties to Black culture and pride, searching for ancestral spirits, roots as well as spiritual and emotional connections to the motherland.[30] Other reasons are based on the fact that thirty-two of the forty-five forts are located in Ghana. The Ghana Tourist and Monuments Board's continuous investment in these historical symbols as tourist attractions has drawn many foreigners – they find these locations the ideal place for holidays, sight-seeing and adventure.[31]

These 'sacred' historical sites have also become controversial as a number of returnee communities in Ghana position themselves not only to make profit as entrepreneurs, but also to challenge the Ghana Monuments and Tourist Board on the preservation and management of the monuments. In short, returnees, especially African Americans in Ghana, have accused the Ghanaian institutions, UNESCO and foreign donors for 'Disneyficating and white-washing' atrocities – slaves were held in these dungeons prior to their dispersals on ships to the New World.[32]

The tactics employed by the current Ghanaian government, especially highlighted by the invention of the Ministry of Tourism and Diasporan Relations, fits within Ebron's claim. In fact, it has set the stage for performing diaspora not only on the local level, but on an international level to attract more tourists in the African Diaspora to their ancestral 'homeland.'[33] Returnees and activists have criticized Ghanaian institutions for performing diaspora and Ghanaian history with the middle passage for economic gains. Recent work by African American scholars, Saidiya V. Hartman and Bayo Holsey, follows the same line of argument, but fails to highlight the ways in which African American entrepreneurs, especially those who have invested heavily in tourism (managing hotels, motels, car rentals and tourist agencies) accumulate wealth. There are a number of African Americans in Ghana and in the United States who use various forms of information technology, especially the internet, to attract tourists to Ghana. They include Henderson Travel Service based in Silver Springs, Maryland, and a host of others in Europe.

The establishment of the new Ministry of Tourism and Diasporan Relations, now responsible for diasporan affairs, has created new outlets for entrepreneurship. It has become a vehicle for sustaining tourism, for collecting revenues in the country, for acting as the go-between for the Ghanaian government and people of African descent, and for promoting the Joseph Project, a new programme designed to showcase the cultural links between people of African descent and Ghanaians. This programme was corroborated by Jake Obetsebi-Lamptey, the former Ghanaian Minister for Tourism and Diaspora Relations during Ghana's 50th independence celebrations in 2007.[34] However, the ministry's objective does not include any future plans for historical sites at the Tabom community.

Indeed, the congregation by people of African ancestry in Ghana, since the demise of British rule on 6 March 1957, would not have been possible without the leading role of the first president, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, former president Jerry John Rawlings, and current president John Agyekum Kufuor. Telling the story about the rise of tourism in Ghana in recent times (and how Blacks in the Diaspora, especially African American returnees, pilgrims and tourists have contributed to various revenue collection stations in the Central Region of Ghana) requires a careful look into how and why Ghana has become the most popular spot for tourism.[35] During the military reign of Jerry John Rawlings in the 1980s and early 1990s, returnees were drawn into the country largely because of incentives such as dual citizenship and land, which Rawlings offered. Since 2000, after current President Agyekum Kufuor took office, tourism in Ghana reached its zenith, and remains the major avenue for attracting people of African descent to the country.[36]

The Tabom communities have extraordinary skills, which include tailoring, and they play prominent roles in Ghanaian societies such as diplomats, educators, entrepreneurs and Christian Church ministers. Famous sportsmen, such as the former World-Featherweight boxing champion, Azumah Nelson, have gained enormous attention and recognition by Ghanaians. President Kufuor's recent nomination of Mrs Georgina Woode as the first female Supreme Court Justice in Ghana in 2007 has received local, national and international attention. However, this recognition has not translated into a narrowed focus on other historical elements, (such as Brazil Lane and others) and their significance to tourism and Afro-Brazilian history in Ghana. These two 'Ghanaian-Brazilians' have made Ghana proud in many ways, yet their communities have been neglected economically and socially.

My argument here is that like the Ghana Tourist and Monument Board, past Ghanaian leaders have not fully supported the Tabom community

in the area of tourism. Rather they concentrate on other annual Pan-African cultural programmes such as Pan-African Festival (PANAFEST), Emancipation Day celebrations, tourist activities (mainly at Elmina and Cape Coast in the Central Region) and 'new' world heritage sites in other regions of Ghana.

The Tabom people are no longer depending on, or waiting for, outside help to showcase their rich history of dual identity. The strategic selection of historical memories as Richards and Schramm assert, converge on many levels with the goals of the Tabom people. The objectives of the descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves are two-fold: first, to pursue economic opportunities through the Tabom leadership and the Brazilian Embassy; and the second is through the future generation, who have taken the law into their own hands by exploiting the situation. As the 'gatekeepers,' the youth harass visitors and tourists who enter the Tabom compound to view Brazil Lane, Brazil House, Caesar House and what some members of the community claim are the remains of former slave dungeons at Otoblohum, along the coastline of Accra.

Obviously, Nii Azumah V and his community are well informed about the capitalist ventures that are unfolding in the tourist industry in Ghana. During our interview, the chief did not hide his economic interests. He blames the Ghana Tourist Board for making it possible for only the people of Elmina and Cape Coast to benefit from revenue generated from the historical monuments in the area, while neglecting equally important historical sites in the Tabom community, especially the First Scissors House at Swalaba which was destroyed by fire in 2007.[37]

CONCLUSION

The development of Brazilian-Ghanaian identity is a complex process or phenomenon. As descendants of former Afro-Brazilian slaves who returned to Ghana in the nineteenth century to reconstruct their past and imagine their future via the restoration of historical monuments – and their efforts to fulfill a yearning of visiting Brazil for the first time, it is important to contextualize their interactions with officials of the Brazilian Embassy in Ghana, the way they perform their dual identity and history, and how they have positioned themselves to attract tourists to their community.

The ongoing relationship between the Tabom people and Brazilians is another element of 'unfinished migrations' in the Diaspora that Patterson and Kelley point out. [38] Zeleza was right when he declared that the African Diaspora is 'a kind of voyage that encompasses the possibility of never arriving or returning.'[39] The Tabom people have not yet arrived at their

dream destination in Brazil. Nevertheless, I argue that they have already carved a reverse migration route in the African Diaspora, through their performance of identity and the successful completion of Brazil House which was opened for tourism in November 2007. As noted earlier, the Tabom people's story is part of a growing body of academic literature and debate to redefine the African Diaspora. Other contesting Diasporic paradigms have grown, boosting the discourse into the twenty-first century.

What I have described in the Tabom compound resonates elsewhere. The two distant and marginalized communities – Loizan town and the Tabom people share similar stories. In the process of displaying and performing their cultures and identity, the Tabom people are confronted with the same predicament the Loizan people encountered when they had to compete with their neighbours, the Isla Verde community (a tourist town in Puerto Rico).[40] As I have shown, Nii Azumah V and his followers have to compete with two popular tourist locations as well – Elmina and Cape Coast castles. Like the people of Loiza, who converted their deteriorating community into a 'capital of [African] tradition,' the descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves also have to use their imagined place of origin and their Afro-Brazilian heritage as an outlet for publicity, while using their historical sites as incentives and a vehicle for progress in their community.

There are other similarities between the subaltern groups in the Caribbean and the Tabom people. Like the Loizan community who 'opened their doors to the recognition of the African tradition, and the town's folklore [to] the media as both source of pride and means of survival,'[41] the Tabom people have imitated successful tourist institutions and communities in Ghana, especially those in the Central Region and, as a result, they have welcomed the Ghana Tourist Board, the Brazilian Embassy and UNESCO to invest in their community.[42] Conversely, considering the popularity of Elmina and Cape Coast castles internationally, the dream of Tabom people would require a great deal of planning and investment. This could be achieved through the leadership of Nii Azumah V, the former world featherweight champion, and the current Supreme Court Justice who trace their ancestry to Brazil through the *tsebi* (patriarchal) and *naabi* (matriarchal) lineage, in that order.

Performances and the commodification of Afro-Brazilian history is not only about the gradual or instant strategic positioning by the Tabom people to either mask their Ghanaian or Brazilian identity or to combine both. Others associated with the Tabom people directly or indirectly do so for self-gratification as well. For the Brazilian Embassy in Ghana, the

Tabom story embodies the strongest Diplomatic enterprise linking the Embassy and Ghanaians – hence, their success as a Diplomatic station on the African continent. The Embassy has also become a go-between for the Tabom community and the Brazilian government. The Embassy prides itself on its connection to the Tabom community, and its ongoing contribution to the configuration of the history of Afro-Brazilians in Ghana.[43] The Embassy has demonstrated this vested interest in this community on its website, by showcasing the story of the Tabom people. Certainly, the Embassy is readily available to provide information and resources that enhance their image in Ghana.

As this paper has shown, the unfolding cultural performances and the institutionalization of tourism for economic gains in Ghana have not escaped the watchful eyes of Nii Azumah V and the Tabom leadership. The performance of culture and the management of identity are visible as the Tabom people exhume diasporic bonds for economic benefit in order to turn their community into a pilgrimage for tourists, pilgrims and visitors to Ghana. Nonetheless, another critical question remains: how would the 'native state' of Brazil embrace the Tabom people after nearly two centuries of separation? Considering continuing debates about notions of racial democracy and equality in Brazil, as a large body of scholarship points out,[44] the Tabom people's future visits to Brazil, as they continue to imagine the 'fatherland,' will require a great deal of adjustment and a great deal of awakening, which could represent quite a disturbing reality to them.

President Lula da Silva's first visit to Ghana on 12 April 2005

The New Brazil House which was opened on 17 November 2007

Culturally, the Tabom have strong ties to the *Ga* ethnic group which gives them an added advantage. The Afro-Brazilian community participates fully in annual Homowo festivals. Homowo, as I stated earlier, is an annual cultural celebration by the Ga people and their neighbours in the coastal regions of Ghana. The *Ga*'s are the ethnic group in Accra whose leader, Mantse (chief) Nii Ankrah, offered the first generation of Afro-Brazilian 'returnee' slaves a piece of land in 1854 when they arrived on the Gold Coast.[45] Interestingly, the Tabom people have not yet expressed any interest in involving themselves fully in national cultural celebrations, or local practices such as Candomblé or Capoeira, two of the major religious and cultural practices by Afro-Brazilians in Brazil.[46] According to the elder, George Aruna Nelson, a section of the Tabom community participate regularly in rituals and worship services such as shango, that could be traced through African religious survivalism preserved by their ancestors in Brazilian plantations. Their lack of, or minimal participation in, or celebration of Brazilian culture does much to reveal the scope and limitation of their ancestral connections.

A abertura da casa Brasil epitomizes a dawn and heralds changes sweeping through Tabom communities. It is the opening of a new chapter in Afro-Brazilian history in Ghana, declaring that the Tabom account can no longer

be placed in the dark shadows of history, or be pushed to the periphery of Ghanaian and African Diaspora historiography. Indeed, the community is ready for tourism and will occupy an important position in the policies of Ghanaian tourist institutions; as well as international donors, UNESCO and officials of World Heritage Sites who have invested enormously in the Elmina and Cape Coast castles.

ENDNOTES

1. Future works will examine other developments in the Tabom community, after the opening of Brazil House for tourism.
2. Kevin A. Yevington, 'The Anthropology of Afro-Latin America and the Caribbean: Diaspora Dimensions,' *Annual Review Anthropology* 30 (2001), 237.
3. Glossary: Tabom literally means 'OK.' According to Marco Aurelio Schaumloeffel, a Brazilian lecturer at the Ghana Institute of Languages, the *Ga* people, an ethnic group in Accra, derived the name after they heard conversations between the first generation of Afro-Brazilian returnees who spoke only Portuguese when they arrived in the Gold Coast (now Ghana). See Marco Aurelio Schaumloeffel, 'The influence of the Portuguese Language in Ghana,' *Daily Graphic*, 7 May 2004, 7; 'Tabon: The Afro-Brazilian community in Accra,' *Daily Graphic*, 3 June 2004, 14. Tabom people, Tabom community and the descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves in Ghana will be used interchangeably.

   Dedication: The paper is dedicated to Mr Samuel Nelson, one of the elders of the Tabom community and former Ghanaian Minister of Sports. Nelson arranged for my interview with Nii Azumah V in August 2005, at his residence in Accra. Nelson died two years later.
4. Silke Stricklrodt, '*Afro-Brazilians' of the Western Slave Coast in the Nineteenth Century*, in José C. Curto and Paul E. Lovejoy, *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil During the Era of Slavery* (NY: Humanity Books, 2004), 213-214.
5. It took almost a year for me to interview Nii Azumah V, the current leader of the Tabom community because of the protocols that are involved in talking to *Mantse* (*Ga* word in Ghana, meaning chief or king). Officials at the Brazilian Embassy were willing to help me set up an appointment with the *Mantse*, but they also had to go through 'red-tape' to introduce me to Nii Azumah V. I chose an ethnographic approach because of a lack of sources or archival works on the new generation of the Tabom people, especially regarding their plans to visit Brazil. Nii Azumah V, interview with Kwame Essien, 14 August 2005, 2.

6. Marco Aurelio Schaumloeffel, interview with Kwame Essien, January 20, 2005.
7. Alcione M. Amos and Ebenezer Ayensu, 'I am a Brazilian: History of the Tabon, Afro-Brazilian in Accra,' *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, New Series*, no. 6, 2002, 46.
8. Nehemiah Owusu Achiaw, 'Brazilian President Official Visit: Govt. Honors Lula da Silva,' *Daily Graphic*, 14 April 2005, 24.
9. George Aruna Nelson, interview with Kwame Essien, 6 August 2008, 1.
10. José C. Curto and Paul Lovejoy (eds), *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil during the Era of Slavery* (NY: Humanity Books, 2004); Kristin Mann and Edna G. Bay, (eds). *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (London and Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001); Robin Law, *The Evolution of Brazilian Community in Ouidah* in Kristin Mann and Edna G. Bay, (eds). *Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (London and Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001); Alcione M. Amos and Ebenezer Ayensu, 'I am a Brazilian: History of the Tabon, Afro-Brazilian in Accra,' *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, New Series* 6 (2002); Michael J. Turner 'Les Bresiliens—The Impact of Former Bresilian Slaves Upon Dahomey' (Ph. D Dissertation, Boston University, 1975); Samuel Quarcoopome, 'The Brazilian Community of Ghana' (Dissertation, University of Ghana, June 1970).
11. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, 'Rewriting The African Diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic,' *African Affairs*, 104, 414 (2005), 63-64.
12. Ibid, 42.
13. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (MA: Beacon Press, 1995), 27; 96-107.
14. Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin Kelley, 'Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the Making of the Modern World Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Modern World,' *African Studies Review* 13, 1 (April 2000), 11.
15. Kim D. Butler, 'Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse,' *Diaspora* 10 (2001), 194.
16. Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, 'Rewriting The African Diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic,' *African Affairs* (2005), 39-41, 54-57, 63-64. See also Robin Law, 'Francisco de Souza in West Africa, *1820-1849*' in José C. Curto and Paul Lovejoy (eds), *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil During the Era of Slavery* (NY: Humanity Books, 2004), 189, 193.
17. Paula A. Ebron, *Performing Africa* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 1; Saidiya V. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007), 104-105, 162-172; Bayo Holsey, *Routes*

of Remembrance: Refashioning the Slave Trade (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 166-172, 229-232.

18. Paula A. Ebron, *Performing Africa* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 1; 17.
19. Kathrina Schramm, 'Coming Home' in Simon Coleman and John Eade (eds), *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures and Motion* (NY: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2004), 138; Peter Sutherland, 'Ancestral Slaves and Diasporic Tourists: Retelling History by Reversing Movements in a Counternationalist Vodun Festival from Benin' in Toyin Falola and Christine Jennings, *Africanizing Knowledge: African Studies Across Disciplines* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 141-146.
20. Peter Sutherland, 'Ancestral Slaves and Diasporic Tourists: Retelling History by Reversing Movements in a Counternationalist Vodun Festival from Benin' in Toyin Falola and Christine Jennings, *Africanizing Knowledge: African Studies Across Disciplines* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 69-71; 79.
21. Samiri Hernandez Hiraldo, *Black Puerto Rican Identity and Religious Experiences* (FL: University Press of Florida, 2006), 5; Samiri Hernandez Hiraldo, Translated by Mariana Ortega-Brena 'If God Were Black and from Loiza:' Managing Identities in a Puerto Rican Seaside Town,' *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 146, 33, No. 1 (January 2006), 66; Samiri Hernandez Hiraldo, *Black Puerto Rican Identity and Religious Experiences* (FL: University Press of Florida, 2006), 4-6.
22. Samiri Hernandez Hiraldo, Translated by Mariana Ortega-Brena 'If God Were Black and from Loiza: ' Managing Identities in a Purto Rican Seaside Town,' *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 146, Vol. 33, No. 1, January 2006, 67. See also Samiri Hernandez Hiraldo, *Black Puerto Rican Identity and Religious Experiences* (FL: University Press of Florida, 2006), 4.
23. According to Dr Seth Garfield, a professor of Latin American History at the University of Texas at Austin (who was conducting research work in Brazil during the World Cup), two newspapers provided front page coverage about Afro-Brazilians history in Ghana: *O Globo* and *Jornal do Brasil.* It is not clear, however, what was said about the Tabom people's link with Brazil). Seth Garfield, interview with Kwame Essien on September 15, 2006.
24. Nii Azumah Nelson, phone conversation with Kwame Essien on 2 December 2006.
25. Kathrina Schramm, 'Coming Home' in Simon Coleman and John Eade (eds) *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures and Motion* (NY: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2004), 138; Peter Sutherland, 'Ancestral Slaves and Diasporic Tourists: Retelling History by Reversing Movements in a Counternationalist Vodun Festival from Benin' in Toyin Falola and Christine Jennings, *Africanizing*

Knowledge: African Studies Across Disciplines (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 138.

26. Paula A. Ebron, *Performing Africa* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 27.
27. Sandra L. Richards, 'What is to be Remembered: Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons' *Theatre Journal* 57 (2005), 617.
28. Ibid, 620.
29. Ibid, 622.
30. Ibid, 626.
31. Osei-Tutu, Brempong. 'African American reaction to the restoration of Ghana's Slave Castles.' *Public Archaeology*, vol. 3 (2004), 196.
32. Edward M. Bruner, 'Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora,' *American Anthropologist* vol. 98, no.2 (June 1996), 289-291.
33. Brempong Osei-Tutu, 'Ghana's 'Slave Castles,' Tourism, and the Social Memory of the Atlantic Slave Trade' in Akinwumi Ogundiran and Toyin Falola (eds) *Archaeology of Atlantic Africa and the African Diaspora.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007, 189. See also, Stephen Buckley, 'U.S., African Blacks Differ on Turning Slave Dungeons Into Tourist Attractions ...' *The Washington Post,* April, 1995, A1-2.
34. http://www.highana.com. There is a growing body of work examining how The Ghana Tourist Board and other institutions, especially travel agents both in Ghana and the African Diaspora are using the internet as a forum for advertising tourism in Ghana. See also Sandra L. Richards, 'What is to be Remembered: Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons' *Theatre Journal* 57 (2005), 621; Kathrina Schramm, 'Coming Home' in Simon Coleman and John Eade (eds) *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures and Motion* (NY: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2004), 138; Peter Sutherland, 'Ancestral Slaves and Diasporic Tourists: Retelling History by Reversing Movements in a Counternationalist Vodun Festival from Benin' in Toyin Falola and Christine Jennings, *Africanizing Knowledge: African Studies Across Disciplines* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 70-73.
35. Reporter, 'Tourism and Travels: 'Joseph Project' to be launched in July,' *The Spectator*, 10 February, 2007, 19. See also Seth Nunoo, All Hail Emancipation Day,' *Daily Graphic*, 30 July 1998; http://www.africa-ata.org/gh9.htm.
36. Kwame Essien, *African Americans in Ghana: Successes and Challenges, 1985 through 2005* (MA Thesis: The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 2006), 5-6; 10-14; 17-22. See also Sandra L. Richards, 'What is to be Remembered: Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons' *Theatre Journal* 57 (2005), 619.
37. Kwame Essien, African Americans in Ghana and their contributions to 'Nation Building: 1985 through 2004, In Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola (eds),

The United States and West Africa: Interactions and Relations (NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008), 11-19; 35-37.

38. Nii Azumah V, interview with Kwame Essien, 14 August 2005, 2; 29 July, 2008, 1.
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41. Samiri Hernandez Hiraldo, Translated by Mariana Ortega-Brena 'If God Were Black and from Loiza: 'Managing Identities in a Puerto Rican Seaside Town,' *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 146, 33, No. 1, January 2006, 75; 78-79.
42. Ibid, 74.
43. Nii Azumah V, interview with Kwame Essien, 14 August 2005, 2.
44. Ibid, See http: www.brasil.org/eglish.htm.
45. The issue of race/ism is a complex subject that requires extensive analysis. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper. It is important to mention racial issues in this paper to show how ill-informed the Tabom people are about this contentious subject in Brazil. This could influence their visit to Brazil in a positive or negative way. The following books explore racial problems and social inequality in Brazil: Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanne Oboler (eds), *Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Edward Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 16, 137-139; Thomas Skidmore, *Brazil: Five Centuries of Change* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), xiv; Michael Mitchell, 'Blacks and the Abertura Democratica' and Florestan Fernandez, 'The Negro Problem in a Class Society,' in Arlene Torres and Norman E. Whitten Jr., *Blackness in Latin America and the Caribbean: Social Dynamics and Cultural Transformations* 2 (In Indiana University Press, 1998); Michael Hanchard *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento of Rio de Janeiro, 1945-1988* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994) ; George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, 1888-1988* (WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); Nascimento, Abdias do. *Brazil Mixture or Massacre? Essays in the Genocide of a Black People* (MA: The Majority Press, 1989).
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10

AGUDAS AND JAGUDAS:

Afro-Brazilian Returnees, Cultural Renaissance and Anticolonial Protagonism in West Africa

FÉLIX AYOH'OMIDIRE[1]

INTRODUCTION

In the early hours of the 25 January 1835, the city of Salvador, the capital of the state of Bahia and one of the oldest and strongest slave societies in the Americas, woke up to the historic slave revolt known as *A revolta dos Malês*. The revolt was masterminded by Nagô/Yoruba freedmen, using the ànàgó language as the medium of communication, while the Islamic faith served as both their rallying point and camouflage. The Brazilian authorities were particularly scared by the level of secrecy and planning of the revolt, made possible by the use of African language. The repression was more severe than ever: four of the key figures were executed and their bodies displayed in public places, scores of others were imprisoned and, to prevent future revolts, the Brazilian government adopted a policy of encouraging and/or forcing freed Africans, in Brazil, to return to their West African homeland. Thus began the historic back-and-forth movements between Brazil and West Africa, that Pierre Verger aptly christened the *Flux et reflux*. (Verger 2002 [1968]: 365ss; Costa e Silva 2003:119ff)

In West Africa, for diverse reasons, the vast majority of returnees settled in the coastal regions, stretching from the Cape Coast in modern day Ghana, through Aneho in Togo; Ouidah, Cotonou and Porto-Novo in Benin Republic; Badagry and Lagos in Nigeria, and moving as far south as the island of Fernão do Pó (FernandoPo). Paradoxically, in West Africa these returnees, who came to be known as the Aguda or Amaro in Nigeria, Togo and Benin, and the *Tábom* (Portuguese for: 'ok, fine!') in Ghana, were characterized at the same time by their unified Afro-Latin identity and a zeal for the jealous valorization of their African cultural heritage. In the decades following their return, many of them, like Martiniano Eliseu do Bonfim, Rudolfo Martins Bamgboxe, Felisberto Souza, João Esan da Rocha and the

eminent jurist family of the Alakijas, stood up against the emergent British colonial administration in Lagos, affirming their professional and political independence from the British and championing the Yoruba cultural renaissance under whose banner future Western-educated Nigerians like Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Nnamidi Azikiwe would launch the political platform for the independence of Nigeria from Britain in 1960.

The French itinerant photographer-turned ethno-historian in Brazil, Pierre Fatumbi Verger (1902-1996), gave a detailed documentation of the political, social and economic circumstances of the eventual departure of the first group of emancipated Africans from Bahia in the months that followed the Malê Rebellion. It was exactly a year after the Rebellion, on 25 January 1836, that the first group of returnees left the coasts of Bahia de Todos os Santos for the Bay of Benin. The group, made up of more than 160 emancipated Africans, was led by Antônio da Costa and João Monteiro, who negotiated the charter of the British ship, *Nimrod,* to guarantee safety and comfort on their historic return to Africa. The success of their return to Africa encouraged other emancipated Africans to follow in the months and years to come.

Verger and many other historians and anthropologists studying Afro-Brazilian returnees (Milton Guran, João José Reis and Alberto da Costa e Silva), have analyzed the arrival of these African returnees, the travails and vicissitudes that they experienced in their attempts to integrate with the African society they met on their return. The present paper intends to focus on the role of the Agudas in the construction of a unique ethnic, socio-cultural and political identity in the West African societies that welcomed them at the time, especially in the region of the Bay of Benin that later became Francophone and Anglophone colonial territories.

THEORIZING THE RETURN TO AFRICA

The hope of an eventual return to their original homeland is a constant feature of every diasporic consciousness, be they Jewish, Asian or African. It is a concept that helps to alleviate the pain of separation experienced by every exile, be it forced or voluntary. It is a dream kept alive by generations. However, the eventual actualization of such a dream may take diverse forms, depending on the prevailing circumstances surrounding the life of the exiled populations.

In the case of enslaved Africans and their descendants in the New World, the concept and hope of one day returning to their African homeland was one of the strongest elements of their collective socio-religious psyche throughout the years of slavery, continuing well into the contemporary

period. There is a paradoxical counterpoint to the allegory contained in the actions of the agents of the Dahomean king when loading slaves at Ouidah in present-day Republic of Benin. Enslaved individuals, on the point of being loaded onto the slave ships, were forced to circle round the legendary *arbre de l'oubli* (*Tree of Oblivion*) located along the path to the beach. This was to ensure that they forgot their individual identity and lost their willpower before they were transported to the unknown. These same agents of slavery obliged the same captives to circle round the *Tree of Remembrance* on the same route so that, after death, their soul could find its way back to the African homeland.

Upon their arrival on the other side of the Atlantic, the first instinct of every enslaved African was to find his way back to Africa. This constituted a constant determinant in the diverse modalities of African resistance to slavery in the Americas – suicide, poisoning of the slave master and his family, escaping into the bush and other inaccessible places to form marooned communities (known diversely as *palenques, cimarrones* or *quilombos*) or engaging in armed rebellion against the slave oligarchy.

Following the official abolition of slavery, which varied according to the colonial power – Haiti (1804), Cuba (1886) and Brazil (1888) – the prospect of return to Africa was an attractive option to most of the former slaves. They were disenchanted with their new status as emancipated slaves; without right to citizenship nor access to economic, social or political rights in the societies that had taken from them the best of their physical, cultural and economic capacities.

In the case of Brazil, for example, after the abolition of slavery on 13 May 1888, the teeming population of emancipated Afro-Brazilians discovered that they had suddenly been turned into victims and scapegoats of Brazilian society in its bid to attain Modernization. They were expelled from the farmhouses and other properties of their erstwhile masters. Instead of granting them access to land or any other economic sustenance, the White Brazilian oligarchy instead opened its doors to impoverished migrants from places as diverse as France, Italy, Poland, Germany and Russia.

These migrants were given land, seedlings and other assistance to colonize different regions of the Brazilian territory. The logic of this was to 'humanize' and 'civilize' the country whose national identity had become too linked to the teeming Black presence among its population. In fact, the country was described by most visiting European travellers as a natural extension of Africa, marked by the same 'exotic' life and all attendant 'characteristics' of 'tropical backwardness'.

Against such a backdrop of freedom without true emancipation that characterized, without exception, all former slave societies in the New World, from the United States to Cuba, from Brazil to Trinidad and Tobago, the idea of a return to Africa came to represent more than a mere dream. Historically, one can make mention of two broad forms of this return to the Africa homeland, viz. the spiritual and the physical.

Under the first category, one can group the religious and cultural reawakening of Blacks in the New World, leading to the founding of exclusive African religious 'republics' as exemplified in the formation of the Brazilian *Candomblé*, the Cuban *Santería*, the Haitian *Voodoo* and the Trinidadian *Shango*. Even the Jamaican Rastafarian and reggae traditions are part and parcel of the spiritual return of African descendants to the Mother Continent. (Ohadike 2007: 81-103) Mention should also be made of other forms of cultural return to Africa like the poetic expressions of literary movements such as *Négritude* and *Pan-Africanism*. These were orchestrated respectively by such illustrious Africans and African descendants as the trio of Senghor (1906-2001), Aimé Césaire (1913-2008) and Léon Gontran Damas (1912-1978) in the case of *Négritude*, and Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972), W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963), Edmond Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912), and others, in the case of *Pan-Africanism*.

The Jamaican born Afro-Caribbean hero, Marcus Garvey (1887-1940), is generally remembered in history as one of the major exponents of the second phase of the *Back-to-Africa* Movement, that is the physical return of Afro-Americans to Africa. This movement mostly affected the Anglophone post-slavery societies like the United States, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago. Many African-Americans came to Liberia, Ghana, Mali and Ethiopia. However, the Agudas (Afro-Brazilian returnees to West Africa) settled along the coastal region that stretches from Ghana to Nigeria. They constitute a separate category, given the direct historical and cultural connections of the returnees to the region elected.

AGUDA OR JAGUDA?

It is common among historians to treat emancipated African returnees as a more or less homogenous group, based mainly on the specific geographical, linguistic, cultural and political regimes under which they had been socialized in the Americas. They were, therefore, often lumped together either as Afro-Brazilian, Afro-Cuban, Afro-Caribbean or Afro-American returnees. For the purpose of this paper, I intend to treat the Afro-Brazilian returnees as an entity comprising two distinct groups: the ones I call *Aguda*, following the historic and contextual use of the term

along the West-African coastline states, and those I prefer to call *Jaguda*, in view of the not-so-positive roles they played in the political, social, economic and cultural development of the societies that welcomed them.

There is no consensus among scholars today as to the etymology of the term *Aguda* itself as used for, and later adopted by, Afro-Brazilian returnees to the Bay of Benin. As is the case more often than not in most ethnic names, the term may have originally been used by 'outsiders' to describe the group, due to some observable traits or aspects of their culture. What we know is that, along the coastal stretch of the Bay of Benin, from Lomé and Aneho in present day Togo, through Ouidah, Cotonou and Porto-Novo in present day Benin Republic, to Badagry, Lagos, Abeokuta and some other parts of Yorubaland in Nigeria, the group of Afro-Brazilian returnees have been known as *Aguda* since the mid-to-late nineteenth century. However, it is interesting to note that, for some reasons difficult to explain today, this same group, at one time or the other, came to be referred to as the *Amaros*, especially along the Lagos-Abeokuta axis, another ethnonym whose etymology is probably as obscure as the original ethnic appellation of *Aguda* itself. However, one may here conjecture a connection to the Bahian city of Santo Amaro da Purificação, a Nagô-Yoruba stronghold located in the heart of the *Recôncavo* region of the Bay of All Saints from where the bulk of reinforcement was meant to have come to join the Malê Rebellion of 1835. (Verger, 1968; Reis, 1996)

Returning to our search for the etymology of the term *Aguda*, some claim it comes from the expression 'vamos ajudar', meaning, 'let's help out' or, in some romanticized translation offered by some authors, 'we have come to help'; while others claim it is derived from 'algodão', meaning 'cotton', which, as some Aguda historians would like to make us believe, was one of the principal cash crops introduced into West Africa by the Agudas, alongside other valuable crops like cassava and the oil palm. Serpa Soares, a chronicler of the Portuguese Fort of São João Batista de Ajudá, even claimed that the name derived from *agundan*, a name supposedly used by the locals to describe the Portuguese founders of the fortress, for their laziness and vanity.

The *Ajuda* theory may appear to be the more plausible explanation, as borne out by the frequent occurrence of the term 'ajuda' (help) or 'ajudá' (a preferred Brazilian version of the toponym *huedá*) in the historiography of the Afro-Brazilian presence on the West African coast. Especially inasmuch as one connects the post-colonial and contemporary Aguda identity to the singular figure of Francisco Félix de Souza, the legendary Chachá, who was said to have named his first two dwellings on the coast

(first in Badagry, and later in Aného or Small Popo around 1800) Adjido, an Africanized version of what appeared to be his personal motto or mantra 'Deus me ajuda' (May God help me).[2] Another fact that can be considered in favour of such a theory is that the Portuguese (Brazilian) slave fort was named, right from its inauguration, the *Forte São João Batista de Ajudá* (St. John the Baptist of Ajudá Fort). It still stands today as the greatest material legacy of Brazilian protagonism in the construction of the Aguda cultural and historical identity. It is where Francisco Félix de Souza exercised various functions, from simple book-keeper to Commander; getting as far as converting the same fort into his personal estate, at the peak of his reign as the viceroy of Ouidah.

Alberto da Costa e Silva made a very revealing observation that conclusively links the name *Aguda* to the fame of Bahia and its African population as early as the mid-eighteenth century. According to him, the term *Aguda* appeared, probably for the very first time, in a text dated around 1741 (or possibly 1841) with the express meaning of 'Bahia'. The expression used was *máhiagudá*, supposedly meaning 'I am going to Bahia', in the *fon*-derived language used by Mina slaves in Brazil[3], as translated by Antônio da Costa Peixoto in his manual on the *língua geral de Mina* as used in Brazil. (Costa e Silva, 2004:110) This explanation is in accord with the implied definition of the term *Aguda* by none less than the eminent Aguda himself, Martiniano Eliseu do Bonfim (also known as Ojelade), who was the principal Nago-Yoruba informant-cum-translator of many Brazilianist researchers and anthropologists in the 1940s. (Matory, 2005: 40ff) In the recorded interview with the American researcher Lorenzo D. Turner between 1940 and 1941 (spiced with Yoruba folktales, songs and history of the movement of Yoruba freedmen between Bahia and Lagos from the mid-to-late nineteenth century onward) Bonfim summarized his biography as follows: 'Wón bími ní ilú àgùdà, sùgbón Èkó ni emi gbónjú sí', meaning 'I was born in Agudaland (Bahia) but I grew up in Lagos' (Turner, L.D. 1941, Disk EC 10' 721, item 6 side A Track 17). All through his conversation with Turner, Bonfim made a clear distinction between Lagos, which he referred to as either 'Èkó' or 'Ilú ayé' (Land of the living), and 'ilú Aguda' (Bahia).

Therefore, there is no doubt that the term *Aguda* has always been a direct reference to Bahia, or, as Costa e Silva puts it, 'o que veio da Bahia' (the one who comes from Bahia), although, the term was later extended to include returnees from other north-eastern states of Brazil like Pernambuco, Paraíba and Alagoas. Also, as we shall see later on, in the specific context of the rivalry between the Latin-American Yoruba returnees and the *Saro* returnees in colonial Lagos, the term *Aguda* was further extended to

include Cuban returnee families like the Fernández, the Pedros and the Juan Carlos.

On the other hand, the term *Jaguda*, as used in the title of this paper, is actually more than just a play on words for mere aesthetic or poetic effects. It is a term that became prominent, if not outright invented, in colonial Lagos where it came to signify anything between a thief, a swindler, a fraudster or any other category of miscreant, or what contemporary *omo-Ekos* (Lagosians) would call the *gbájú è* family. One distinctive feature of these characters is the smoothness of their operations, as opposed to those who might be called 'oni jàgídíjàgan' or 'jàndùkú' (hooligans), who make violence their stock in trade. I strongly suspect that the origin of the term may not be far from the *Aguda* (Bahia) smooth operators; the original word may have been 'ìjà àgùdà', that is to say, the Aguda (Bahia) survival tactics and antics. Interestingly, the term somehow found its way back to Brazil, probably as one of the linguistic elements that transited between the Bay of Benin and the Bahia de Todos os Santos during the heyday of the *Flux et reflux*, and is documented today in some Yoruba-Portuguese glossaries and dictionaries.[4]

Although, in the socio-cultural, historic, economic and political realities of the contemporary Aguda communities in Benin Republic, Togo and Nigeria, it is common to hear descendants of Francisco Félix de Souza (the legendary Chachá of Ouidah) and those of Domingos José Martins of Lagos, or even the descendants of Ignácio Sulé Paraiso of Porto Novo, treating one another as members of the same Aguda family; co-inheritors of the same ideals of perpetuating the Afro-Brazilian legacy of their illustrious progenitors. It is pertinent to this study that a close analysis be made of the role of each of these Aguda 'lineages' in order to allow for a clearer historical and sociological appraisal.

THE GENERATIONS OF THE JAGUDAS

Chronologically speaking, the Jagudas preceded the Agudas in their return to Africa by close to one century. Alberto da Costa e Silva, a former Brazilian Ambassador to Nigeria and Benin, and a leading historian of Afro-Brazilians repatriates in West Africa, identified roughly five different categories of those that fall within our present definition of the Jagudas. The first category comprised of freed African slaves who returned to Africa, either because they found out that there was no place for them in the Brazilian society of that time, or because they were anxious to go back to their homeland. As evident in their description, this group was composed exclusively of Africans, mostly natives of the coastal region of

what they, and others like them, would help to transform into the Slave Coast *par excellence*. The second category comprised of an assorted array of Whites, Caboclos, Cafuzos, Mulattos and Negroes who came to the region as sailors on the slave ships, and decided to stay on the coast to strike out on their own in the lucrative slave business. A third category was made up of those agents or representatives of mostly Portuguese slave dealers, who came from Bahia to West Africa to establish slave holding houses from where they sent human cargo to their colleagues, bosses, brothers, cousins or in-laws in Bahia. The fourth category was a small group of African or Brazilian-born slaves, known as *crioulos* in Brazil, who, having being manumitted by their masters, but with the condition of still serving such masters under various arrangements; came, or were sent, to Africa, to deal in slaves on behalf of their masters or ex-masters in Brazil. The fifth category would be those Whites or Mulattos who, like the pirates of old, chose to risk their lives and fortunes in the slave business (Costa e Silva 2004: 34).

The first of this class of Brazilian returnee and, by right, the doyen of the Jagudas *per se* was João de Oliveira. This Yoruba of obvious ègbá extraction, as attested to by the three vertical scarifications called *àbàjá olówu* that adorned his cheeks, was an ex-slave in Bahia, who was said to have returned to his African homeland at about 1733. He dedicated himself exclusively to obtaining and sending slaves to Bahia, where he eventually retired, having amassed so much wealth from the trade that he could live out his last days in the pious peacefulness of the Catholic churches, to whose edification he had contributed immensely during his active days as a slave trader. According to Alberto da Costa e Silva (2004: 24), the zeal of this ex-slave in enslaving his compatriots was such that his name went down in history as the one responsible for single-handedly opening up the great slave embarkation ports of Porto-Novo and Lagos, to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.

Another ex-slave from Bahia, who followed closely in the steps of João de Oliveira, was Antônio Vaz Coelho. He was said to have introduced the use of canoes, armed with canon launchers, to the West African coast. This weapon was a determinant in the capture of slaves, and the political destabilization of coastal states, in a bid to ensure the uninterrupted flow of slaves to the New World.

By far the undisputed prince of this group was Francisco Félix de Souza, who became the legendary Chachá, viceroy of the kingdom of Dahomey. By a twist of fate and history, he became the very symbol and rallying point of contemporary Aguda 'lineage' and identity in the vast

area that stretches from Lomé in Togo, to Badagry in Nigeria, with his 'kingdom' headquartered in Ouidah. According to his biography by Verger (1968) and Costa e Silva (2003 and 2004), this Brazilian mulatto came to the Slave Coast around 1800, under hazy circumstances (some said he was a fugitive from the Brazilian judicial system, others that he was an envoy of the Portuguese crown detailed to the Fort of Ajudá). He rose to become the most habile of all slave dealers on the coast, through a combination of sheer tenacity of purpose and diplomatic machinations. He thoroughly Africanized himself to the point of adopting the principal attributes of an African chieftain of his time – strategic marital union with powerful local families, a more-than-marked presence in the court of the powerful king of Dahomey, with a deep knowledge of the languages and customs of the local community. For instance, he was said to have entered into a *pacte de sang* (blood oath) with the future lord and master of the Dahomey kingdom, the fledgling prince Gakpé, who, on ascending the throne of Abomey around 1817, took the royal name Ghézo. Due to this blood tie, the *dadá* (king of Dahomey) made Francisco Félix de Souza not only his right hand man, but also the most powerful slave trader in his entire kingdom, appointing him customs chief of the kingdom, with first right to sell slaves (mostly and supposedly the king's own slaves) – before any other trader could offer slaves for sale at the port of Ouidah.

THE GENERATIONS OF THE AGUDAS

The history of those I consider the real Aguda, for the purpose of the present paper, can be said to centre round the year 1835, as a direct aftermath of the Malê Rebellion in Bahia.

Although there is no denying the fact that some of the manumitted slaves returning from Bahia were, after staunchly defending the right of enslaved Africans to liberty and equality, also engaged in the slave business. At least for an initial period after their return, the bulk of the group of returnees soon settled down to alternative economic, social and cultural activities that laid the foundation for intensive as well as durable economic and political development, laying solid foundations for the construction of a distinct ethnic and cultural identity in the region.

CATEGORIZATION OF THE AGUDAS

What significantly characterized the return of the Agudas to West Africa was their free will. Verger and other historians of the reverse exodus remind us that the return of the Agudas to Africa was fraught with difficulties and dangers. They were exposed to danger on the high seas as well as on land:

the danger of falling into the hands of hostile native Africans on their return, and even becoming the victims of extortionist kings and rulers who might want to confiscate their hard-earned liberty, as well as the material goods they brought with them on their return. As a matter of fact, some Aguda returnees did suffer the latter fate. The fact remained that, unlike the outward journey made by either the returning Agudas themselves or, in most cases, their parents or ancestors (a journey in which they had no option, made in chains and in unhealthy and inhuman cargo holds because they were cargo rather than passengers), the return of the Agudas was an expression of their freedom, an act of volition. This, already, was most significant for the returnees. Moreover, the fact that the returning Agudas could bring with them their *vivos e mortos*[5], to borrow the diasporic expression of Stuart Hall, is clear evidence that they were masters of their destiny, at least, to a certain extent.

ÀGÙDÀ Ò JE LÁBÉ GÈÉSÌ: AFRO-BRAZILIAN PROFESSIONALS IN COLONIAL LAGOS

Costa e Silva (2004:31) said that many of the *Aguda* descendants he interviewed in Lagos, Nigeria, claimed that when their ancestors left Bahia, they brought with them, well hidden on their persons, little sacks containing *ouro em pó* (gold dust). The less fortunate among them arrived in Lagos with the instruments of their trade, some rolls of tobacco leaves, dried meat and barrels of Brazilian gin known as *cachaça*. With these, they were able to make a new beginning.

Indeed, one of the greatest legacies of their sojourn in Brazil was the professional training they received. Unlike their *saro* contemporaries, most of whom returned to Yorubaland with only some rudiments of Western education received from British missionaries in Freetown, most of the Agudas came back, not with book knowledge or mere theories of survival, but with professional skills.

The majority of the Agudas were liberal professionals, artisans and craftsmen among whom were building contractors, masons, carpenters, painters, goldsmiths, tailors, dressmakers, cake makers and bakers. Others were traders who engaged in a two-way trade between Bahia and Lagos. They exported to Bahia goods like palm oil, cola nut (kola arabica), hand-woven African fabric (*aso òkè*), black soap (*ose dúdú*) and other culture-specific items like *orógbó* (bitter cola), *ataare*, *òrí* (shea butter), *osùn* (camwood). Some of these items were highly valued by Yoruba-African descendants on the other side of the Atlantic, who continued with the worship of the *òrìsàs* within the Brazilian Candomblé tradition. In return, they imported from

Bahia such items that have become indispensable to the acculturated taste of the returnee community, like the tobacco leaves from Bahia, dried meat and *cachaça*.

Among the greatest *Aguda* professionals were builders and architects Lázaro Borges da Silva, Francisco Nobre and João Baptista da Costa. They were responsible for designing and building most of old Lagos, including the Brazilian Quarter and the original Central Mosque in Lagos, which they gave the appearance of a Brazilian Baroque church – as did their Aguda comrades in the construction of the Mosquée centrale in Porto-Novo.

The Agudas arrived in West Africa at a time when most of the coastal towns and cities were just coming up, a period that paved the way for colonial occupation by the French and British. The professional expertise of the Agudas became an asset both to the returnees themselves, as well as their host communities. The services of the Aguda builders soon attracted patronage among the well-to-do and the rulers of the land. Today, apart from the wonders of Brazilian architecture that can be admired in coastal cities like Porto Novo and Lagos, houses in the interior of the Yoruba country (the palaces of the *Deji* of Akure and the *Olówò of Òwò*, and personal residences like the *Baba Isàlè* house along Irémo Road, Ile-Ife, with its two cement lions) bear the distinctive signature of the Aguda builders.

Needless to say, as a result of the demand for their skills, many of the Agudas soon became rich enough to interfere in local politics and the socio-cultural life of their respective communities. Also, in order not to be outdone by their *saro* compatriots who prided themselves in their British education, most of the wealthy Aguda families started sending their children to schools abroad, especially to Brazil. The significance of this intellectual training in Brazil is twofold: firstly, it helped to perpetuate the links between the Agudas and Brazil – linguistic, cultural, economic – and, secondly, it helped the Agudas to keep their presence in the two worlds. Some of the families, like the Bamgbose-Martins and the Alakijas, kept a branch of their family on both sides of the Atlantic, with a family house in Lagos and another in Salvador da Bahia; a tradition that continues to this day.

THE AGUDAS AND THE YORUBA RENAISSANCE OF THE 1890s

From the 1890s, a few years after the Berlin Conference, at which European nations decided to balkanize and colonize Africa, the execution of the imperialist ambition of the British, French and German colonizers in West Africa was to bring some drastic changes into the rhythm of life

in the region. Historians of the period have amply documented how the colonizers 'pacified' their future colonial territories in preparation for effective administration, a process that changed the political and social structures of the affected societies. At first, the colonizers flirted with prominent organized groups like the local rulers, as well as the *Aguda* and *Saro* elite of the time; using them to further their imperialist project and, in most cases, not hesitating to pit one group against the other, if such would suit their imperialist purpose. Thus the British administrators of colonial Lagos encouraged a lively mutual antagonism between the Agudas and the Saros by favouring the latter in most political and economic transactions, as well as employment opportunities. The rudiments of British education received in Sierra Leone encouraged the Saros to imitate the White man in all their intellectual and cultural activities, such as mode of dress, food preferences, religion, and even world outlook. This cultural simulacrum soon earned the Saros of colonial Lagos the derogatory epithet of *Oyinbo dudu* (Black Whitemen) from the Agudas. Although the Agudas had also inherited some form of Western culture like Christianity, they tended to be less 'fanatical' towards Western ethos and ethics. This was due to their slavery experience and the Iberian temperament that had given them a more democratic form of Christianity (Catholicism), which is more in tune with their African ancestral religious practices.[6] The Agudas were, therefore, more often than not, characterized by a peculiar brand of cultural and religious *hibridity*, one that permitted them to reconcile their received Catholic faith with the continued practice of their ancestral religions. It was thus not difficult for them to advocate a Yoruba Cultural Renaissance in defiance of British colonial imposition in the Lagos of the 1890s.

A prominent aspect of this renaissance was the pride of place given to African (Yoruba) cultural practices like name bearing, eating and dressing habits, cultural and religious associations and practices, among others. Thus, many of the Agudas resolved to bear, alongside their Aguda (Catholic) names, Yoruba traditional names, especially those connected to the Yoruba religious world-view. This strategic option gave them a twofold distinction: both in Africa as well as in Brazil, they could lay claim to an authentic African origin and exhibit a cultural pride that was hitherto unimaginable to enslaved peoples. Thus, in colonial Africa, the Agudas could confront the colonizer with their claim to a rich Yoruba cultural heritage. In Brazil they could impress upon the White Brazilian ruling elite that they had a long history of authentic African culture and civilization that made them refuse the slave mentality, as shown in their history in Bahia, until, and even beyond, 1835.

A direct offshoot of the Lagos Cultural Renaissance was what Matory (2005: 42) called the emergence of Yoruba 'ethnicity entrepreneurs' responsible for propagating and sustaining the myth of Yoruba cultural superiority in the Atlantic world. It is revealing that this class of Yoruba cultural advocacy bore names like Martiniano Eliseu do Bonfim, aka Ojelade, son of Àre Òjè, Rudolfo Martins Bamgbose (known as the respected *Bamboxê Oubitikô* in Candomblé oral tradition of Bahia), Plácido Alakija, João Esan da Rocha[7], Marcelina da Silva (Obatossi), Eugenia Anna dos Santos (Obabiyi); while their descendants today bear names like Olga do Alaketu, Mestre Didi Axipa and Airzinho de Oxaguiã.[8] It is equally significant that they were exponents of Yoruba religious ethos like Ifá, Egungun, which some of them combined with membership of the Freemason movement of which Plácido Alakija (Sir Adeyemo Alakija) was a District Grand Master, while serving as the *Olori Oluwo* of the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity in Lagos.[9] (Matory 2005: 47)

CONCLUSION: THE JADED HERITAGE OR THE DECLINE OF THE AGUDA LEGACY IN NIGERIA

In a paper titled 'the Jaded Heritage', Tundonu Amosu (1986) tried to account for the decline of the *Aguda* legacy and their loss of prominence in contemporary Nigerian political, economic and socio-cultural activities, as opposed to their kith and kin on the Beninese and Togolese side who are still prominent in public life today.[10] He imputed this decline mainly to the inability of the Agudas in Nigeria to adapt to the British political game, isolating themselves within their community through endogamic marriages and elitist cultural practices. However, one could argue that their brothers on the Francophone side proceeded practically in the same direction, and yet, their fortune is markedly different from that of the Nigerian Agudas.

What I see as the major reasons for the decline of the *Aguda* as a homogenous group in contemporary politics, not only in Nigeria, but also on the Francophone side, is the loss of the *Aguda* language. Indeed, the Agudas in West Africa were able to maintain their cultural identity as a group through the paradoxical adoption of the *Brazilian* identity (See, among others, Cunha: 1985) on African soil. They used the Brazilian language among themselves, practised the 'Brazilianized' Catholic religion, especially its devotion to saints like *Senhor do Bonfim*, *Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos* and Santo Antônio, lived together as a homogenous group in *barrios* like the *Agbo-ilé Sábádò*[11] and the Brazilian Quarter (both in Central Lagos); kept alive the cultural and folkloric activities brought back from Bahia and Pernambuco such as the *careta* (called gareta in Lagos), *burrinha*

and *bumba-meu-boi*. With the loss of the Brazilian language, brought about by the imposition of the different colonial languages, the cultural identity of the Agudas could not last much longer.

Another reason for the decline and loss of influence of the Agudas in West Africa today can be found in the apathy with which the Brazilian ruling class treated (and continue to treat) the African returnees and their descendants. It is on record that, although the *Ológun* (king of Lagos) was among the first political rulers to recognize the Brazilian independence in 1822, going so far as to send emissaries to the court of Dom Pedro II in Rio de Janeiro to offer the new Brazilian government the assurance of friendship and trade collaborations between Brazil and Lagos, the Brazilian government did not seem to consider friendship with any African potentate. This was probably due to their eagerness to rid themselves of any connection to Africa, perceived as a threat in their quest for acceptance as a 'modern' nation by the European and Western nations. As made evident by the text of a speech by *sr. Calmon du Pin e Almeida,* one of the most influential deputies of the Bahian government in 1836, as documented by Verger (2002 [1968]:395), the return of the Agudas to their West African homeland was seen by the Euro-Brazilian elite as killing two birds with one stone. Such a mass repatriation would rid Brazil of the dangers posed by the African freedmen, while also, in an indirect way, and without any additional effort or expense to the Brazilian government, bringing the Gulf of Benin under the Brazilian economic and cultural sphere of influence.[12]

As we can see from the unfolding drama of the Agudas immediately after the Declaration of the Brazilian Republic in 1889, barely a year after the Abolition of Slavery through the *Lei Áurea* of 13 May 1888, Brazil lost all interest in anything that reminded it of its debt to its erstwhile enslaved African populations. They marginalized and victimized the Black population, denying them access to land, employment or citizenship. Instead, they welcomed hunger-driven White immigrants from war-torn Europe to work the land that the Blacks had suddenly become 'incapable' of working. The ruling Brazilian elite was only too glad to abandon the project of founding a Brazilian 'colony' in West Africa, more than happy to forget the cultural and imperialist aspirations of 1836.

I then conclude by stating that the Aguda community in West Africa lost its steam partly, but significantly, because Brazil failed them. Brazil failed the Agudas when it did not encourage their continued cultural and linguistic affiliation to the Brazilian nation.[13] Brazil failed the Agudas by adopting policies that were overtly aimed at the complete eradication of the memory of the African presence in the country. Indeed, Brazil failed

the Agudas and missed the opportunity to establish and nurture a healthy relationship with West Africa, whose cultural influence endures to this day in Brazil. This despite predictions underlying the *mestiçagem* doctrine, within a period of 30 years, which states that there would no longer be any trace of Black Africans in Brazil. Fortunately, the government of President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva has been engaged in reversing this trend, especially with policies like the creation of the extraordinary ministry of racial equality (SEPPIR), the debate on the quota system for the admission of Blacks and African descendants into the universities, and other Affirmative Actions in favour of Blacks in the Brazilian educational system. This is backed with the promulgation of the Federal Law 10.639/03 that mandates the inclusion of African and Afro-Brazilian History and Culture in the curriculum of Brazilian schools. Let us hope that this belated interest in Africa survives beyond the tenure of the present government.

ENDNOTES

1. Félix Ayoh'Omidire teaches Luso-Afro-Brazilian language, literary, cultural and ethnic studies at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. His research interest centres on the Yoruba Atlantic Complex, most especially, the construction of the Yoruba cultural identity in the diverse Latin-American contexts such as Brazil and Cuba. He has published books and articles in Brazil, Cuba, Austria, and Nigeria.
2. A Kerikeri song of the late nineteenth century Lagos, sung by Martiniano Eliseu Bonfim (Ojelade) and another Yoruba dweller of Bahia called Moronkeji, in the interview conducted by Lorenzo D. Turner in Bahia, in 1940. Roughly translated, the song means 'Here we are, we have come, passers by come and see our boat, we the Agudas are here.'
3. The man, who supposedly arrived in Africa as a pauper, was said to be so poor that, in order to buy food, he picked up the cowry shells thrown at the foot of the Yorùbá divinity, Èsù, in its many crossroad and market temples found all over the region.
4. There is an apparent ambiguity here in the use of the term 'Mina', which could refer either to the enslaved Africans captured and shipped within the vast region that lies to the east of the Elmina Castle in modern day Ghana, whose language is known as mina language. In Afro-Brazilian linguistic studies as championed by Yeda Pessoa de Castro, the expression 'mina language', in Brazil of the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries was synonymous with any or all of the languages of the *fongbe* family. On the other hand, 'Mina' in this context could mean the 'mina' that is a direct reference to the mines in the

region, known today as the state of Minas Gerais in the interior of Brazil, where many of the West African slaves worked during the golden age of mineral extraction by the Portuguese in Brazil, i.e. the *ciclo de ouro*.

5. See Eduardo Napoleão. Pequeno Dicionário Yorùbá-Português. Rio de Janeiro: Pallas Editora. (in press).
6. In his definition of the African Diaspora, the Jamaican-born theorist and father of cultural studies claims that it is distinctive of diasporic movements that the subjects of such movement are able to carry along their 'dead and living', i.e. not just their cultural, individual or collective memories, but also their personal belongings in the form of material wealth. See Hall, 2005.
7. The Catholic Church in Yorubaland was originally known as *Ijo Àgùdà*, i.e. the Church of the Agudas.
8. This João Esan da Rocha, proprietor of the famous Casa d'água (Water house) in Lagos, was said to have so little a respect for the British colonial authority in Lagos that he used to light his Cuban cigars with the first paper money introduced by the British in Nigeria, thus bearing out the defiant attitude of the *Agudas,* vis-à-vis the British colonial administration that gave birth to the Yoruba popular saying 'àgùdà ò je lábé Gèésì, isé owó wa làwá n je.' (Lit. we, the Agudas, do not depend on the British for our subsistence, for our professional aptitudes are enough to take care of our needs).
9. During the Aguda Conference, jointly organized by the Beninese IPEA and the UNESCO Slave Route Project in Porto-Novo in 2001, there was on display an impressive 'tree' of Aguda families along the West African coast, with scores of names like D'Almeida, De Souza, Medeiros, Santos, Paraiso, etc.
10. There is enough evidence to believe that it is through this Yoruba Cultural Renaissance that the Agudas were able to spread their influence into the Yoruba interior. Plácido Alakija, (Sir Adeyemo Alakija) was a son-in-law to Sir Adesoji Aderemi (Ooni of Ife from 1930 to 1989 and Governor of the Western State of Nigeria from 1957 to 1966). My initial research has shown that this link with Ife royalty must have led to the arrival of some Aguda families in Ile-Ife at the turn of the twentieth century, settling in the newly-created *ehindi* (beyond the town limits) quarter. This area is bounded today by lower Iremo road, Aderemi road and, most especially, Ojoyin street with its impressive array of one-storey buildings in the famous Brazilian architectural design. Among the Aguda personalities in Ile-Ife is Chief Pedro of *ehindi,* who became famous in the contemporary partisan politics in Ile-Ife.
11. Examples that readily come to mind are those of the Aguda dynasties founded by Francisco Félix de Souza that still continue to hold the title of Chachá in Ouidah, with all the pomp and ceremony that come with the title; the dynasty

of Octaviano Olympio of Togo, great-grandfather of Sylvanus Olympio, the first Togolese president assassinated in 1966 and, indeed, the first victim of military coup d' états in post-colonial Africa, and whose son entered the presidential race. Others include the Catholic Archbishop of Cotonou and other members of the Beninese political class.

12. Lit. Salvador compound. This is an area in Central Lagos inhabited exclusively by Afro-Brazilian returnees from Salvador, the capital of Bahia state and (according to the account given to me by Dr Dipo Fashina, who grew up in the area) all the inhabitants of this *Agbo-ilé* are muslims, although they bear names like Pereira, Pinheiro and the like, a clear indication that they may all have arrived in Lagos at the same time directly from Salvador, Bahia, in the wake of the 1835 Malê Rebellion.
13. It is remarkable the level of shrewdness exhibited in the general political will prevalent in Bahia at the time. Sr. Du Pin e Almeida indeed summarized, in a crude manner, the major concerns of the Euro-Brazilian elite of that time: 'esta medida é necessária para o avanço de nossa civilização, para a diminuição da ameaça das insurreições e para a introdução no Brasil de uma mão de obra mais útil ...Vejo neste estabelecimento, não somente um depósito sem despesas para nossos africanos libertos, mais um núcleo da população, ou pode ser um novo Estado que, participando de nossa civilização e de nossa língua, contribuirá um dia para a extensão de nosso comércio e de nossa indústria nascente.'
14. It may be argued that one of the conditions for recognition of Brazilian independence from Portugal by European potentates, especially England, was that Brazil must not have any colony or political dependency in Africa. However, one can still argue that maintaining linguistic and cultural affinities with communities in Africa could not have been seen as a violation of such an undertaking.

11

AFRO-BRAZILIANS IN LAGOS:

A Question of Home or Exile?

FEMI OJO-ADE

The inhuman enterprise called Slavery has been condemned over the years. Much attention has been paid to the fate and misfortunes of the slaves and generations of descendants across the globe in various Diasporas.

The stories of slaves and their descendants who returned to Africa is a particularly interesting phenomenon, as it is reminiscent of the possibility, and fact, of the original home transmuting into a Diaspora, with all the attendant dilemmas. Are the returnees able, allowed or encouraged, to fit back into a home from where they had been displaced, snatched away, sold and bought like chattel? What is the relationship between them and those among whom they have settled on return? Harmony, or disharmony? Renewed family and friendship, or new enmity based on feelings of betrayal and distrust? Issues of culture, *weltanschauung*, would also come into play: are the returnees still African in mind and soul, or are they alienated from home, assimilated into the trans-Atlantic (exile) way of life or, indeed, caught between there and here?

We are interested here in the case of Africans taken to Brazil, who returned to Africa, specifically to Lagos in the mid-nineteenth century, after the Malê Revolution in Brazil. Observers always point out their profound influence on Lagosian architecture. Of more importance, to our mind, is the human relationship, as well as the returnees' cultural, social and psychological make-up as they settled back into a home that was no longer the only one they, and their families, knew.

The problematics of exile; the projection of home as original or a replication of home; the possibilities of new findings with regard to a people's past and present, as resources for building a future better than the present. Perhaps the experience of those Afro-Brazilians in Lagos would help to explain some of the current issues of a place immensely rich, yet excruciatingly poor.

Among the prominent returnees is the family of Candido da Rocha. In an interview given a few years ago, his daughter refuted the rumour that the family was planning to return to Brazil. Would such a notion be symptomatic of the general Nigerian conundrum, or due to the particular dilemma of the exile finally admitting that the original home is really an alien land?

> Indeed, exile had become for me a ghetto of the mind. (Mphahlele, 'To the Reader,' *Chirundu*, Lawrence Hill, 1981)

> The story of the Brazilians is just one of the many facets of Nigerian history which need to be told in full. (Amosu: 51)

> The voluntary, inner-directed nature of their [Brazilians's] decision to repatriate in Africa seems to be an important aspect of their movement. (Ralston: 591)

> They [the Saros] were more familiar [than the Agudas] with Yorubaland and apparently likely to be more easily integrated with local populations, since they had not been gone for too long. (Soumonni, in *Africa and the Americas*: 234)

> It is very wrong for anyone to speculate that we are moving to Brazil, our root is here in Lagos. (Madam Candida Afodu, in *The Punch*, Lagos, Dec. 28, 1999:27)

In order to fully address the issues that interest us here, and to grasp the essence and thrust of the human experience of slavery, colonialism and the struggle for freedom; of forced repatriation from, and free return to, a home ideally considered as heaven on earth, as well as the dilemma of dreams often transformed into a plethora of nightmares, we deem it useful to begin by reflecting on the concepts of exile and home. In our millennial Africa, exile has become a daily dream due to a myriad of material problems that have made home a living hell. In short, what was once seen as a haven of happiness, a community of fulfillment, and a source of pride, has become a symbol of alienation with an unfathomable mass of oppression and depression. We could take Nigeria as an example: It is often stated that if a ship were to dock at Lagos at dawn, in a matter of minutes it would

be overfilled with willing candidates for modern plantations in Euro-America.

Exile and home: Socio-economic realities and needs evince the luxuries of culture and psyche. Material survival rules the day, in the face of death and destruction. The Ghanaian writer, Ama Ata Aidoo, emphasizes experience in 'the lonely wilderness of that alien labour camp' (*Someone Talking to Sometime*, Harare: The College Press, 1985, p. 49). However, many, if not most, are hardly interested in such intellectual exercise; you do whatever is necessary to survive. If and since home is hell, wherever you are able to put bread on the table is home; exile and home. Still, those who, like Aidoo, have seen through the mask of materialism to reveal its soul of exploitation and dehumanization, insist that home can be other than hell. Hence, the decision to return, as in the case of Es'Kia Mphahlele. Instead of dealing with the phantoms and echoes that attend exile, he decided to 'deal with the concrete reality of Blackness in South Africa;' for, according to him, 'exile is itself a compromise,' psychological incarceration, a mask of compromise that must be shed for 'the skin of commitment'.[1]

Exile and home.[2] Long before today's exodus towards what many would call the citadels of civilization – certainly, there must be some sense of the destination as superior, and the point of departure as inferior in the seemingly senseless desperation and willingness to die in rickety boats on dangerous seas – there were other voyages, undertaken without the voyagers' volition. Home then was heaven on earth, with family and friends providing community, and the very notion of leaving was tantamount to dying. And death it was, that expulsion, that exportation of human cargo across the Atlantic, to construct cities of concrete and industries from which the labourers, treated worse than dogs and horses, were excluded, or kept at the bottom; to be trampled upon by the civilized masters. Many tales have been told of the horrors of that crossing into the New World, of a re-birth best named 'living death.' Let us recall the example of Aimé Césaire as he describes the posture of the master traders convinced that 'we were stupid brutes; that the pulsations of humanity stopped before the doors of the slave compound; that we were a walking dung-hill,' and the elements of suffering, and resolve to survive, in the belly of slave-ships misnamed *Hope* and *Happiness*. 'I hear from the hold below the curses of the chained, the hiccups of the dying, the splash of one thrown into the sea ... the baying of a woman in labor ... the chuckle of the whip ... the scurrying of vermin across worn-out bodies ...'[3]

So, after leaving the various *points of no return* (Badagry, Elmina Castle, Gorée), Africa's enslaved children either survived as newly born, living

dead, or perished in transit. Those who reached the other side never forgot home, and we must insist upon that fact. They refused to become Other, even as they worked out ways and means of keeping alive their deliberately destroyed humanity and identity. Strategies of survival included so-called syncretism, misconstrued as acceptance of the master's supposedly superior culture and civilization, or as a hybrid of African and Euro-American mores, as if the very fact of shared presence and space would not logically connote mixture, or *métissage*, in both the master and his slave.

No matter. The essential point is that, contrary to the resignation implied in the designation of Gorée and other final points of departure, the unwilling voyagers did have opportunities to come back home; and they did come back. First, there was the spiritual return. Home was nurtured, pure and unchangeable in its sublimity, in one's soul, and if one died, one went back to the legendary Guinea. Then, concretely, through the combination of the slaves' resolve and rebellion, and the systemic and systematic racism of the conquistador community, one could return home to Africa. Now, in assessing those return trips, we must bear in mind certain facts:

- One, life in forced exile was not a bed of roses. In the particular instance of Bahia-Brazil, researchers have highlighted the Malê revolt of 1835[4] and the authorities' decision to deport the perceived troublemakers back to Africa.
- Two, connection with home was never completely obliterated, notwithstanding the enslavers' programme of cultural destruction, depersonalization, and creation of a new-world identity marked by a well-structured process of de-Africanization.
- Three, the slaves were not therefore un-African, or Brazilian: the hyphenated name, *Afro*-Brazilian, attests to that fact.
- Four, if the slaves were marginalized in the diasporic society, that did not necessarily translate into an easy readjustment into the African home.

The return to Lagos is of particular interest because of the city's peculiar characteristics, firstly as an economic hub, both in terms of man and material; secondly, as a cosmopolitan centre that has continued to attract all and sundry in a manner probably unmatched anywhere else on the continent and, thirdly, as a Yoruba community whose culture has arguably impacted the African Diaspora most deeply. Lagos is variously described as 'Nigeria's number one city, its commercial nerve centre, its industrial

heart, and the base, still, of its diplomatic enclave. No wonder the city attracts even Tuaregs from the Sahara… The city is as beautiful, as ugly, as mad, as funny and as unattainable as Sir Thomas Moore's Utopia.' (NigeriaInvestment.com) The Portuguese gave Lagos its name (*Lagos de Curamo,* Kuramo waters) while, in local parlance, *Eko* remains the popular nomenclature, not immune to the mystery and myth surrounding the city's history.[5] By the mid-1800s, Lagos had evinced Ouidah (in present-day Benin Republic) as the main port on the so-called Slave Coast.

I would like to recount two episodes that are relevant to the subject under discussion. The first occurred in Lagos many years after the Afro-Brazilians had come back home. On a hot, humid, sunny day, the Brazilian football team, Santos, played a friendly match against Nigeria's national team. Most of the Brazilians were Black like us, and they were led by the legendary *rei,* Pelé, master-dribbler, subliminal sambista of the round ball, a magician recognized the world over, and naturally deified by Lagos's football-crazy crowd. The media effusively wrote pages on the Brazilians' superior skills. But no more. That episode, one notes, belongs to a forgotten past for, nowadays, Santos and Brazil have become footnotes as Man-U/Chelsea/Arsenal-mania has gripped a mass seemingly obsessed with Europe.

The second episode occurred in Salvador-Bahia some years ago, when, as head of the foreign languages department at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, and in charge of the year-abroad programme in Portuguese, I visited the Federal University with three colleagues involved in establishing other linkage programmes. We were welcomed at several Candomblé Houses. We were treated as long-lost family found again. As Africans from Ile-Ife, cradle of Yoruba culture, we were perceived as Mother Africa, and our hosts, the new-found family, vicariously lived Africa during those moments of mirth and ecstasy. However, to their utter astonishment and disappointment, a couple of my colleagues, fervent Christians, expressed shock at the 'barbarity and backwardness' of those Baianos still engaged in Orisa worship.[6]

These two episodes would, I hope, assist us in at least partially deciphering the cultural amnesia and alienation of an extended family, particularly within the context of a global village: Afro-Brazilians in Lagos, and Africans in Brazil. Reciprocity. Continuities. Contradictions. Home and Exile. Home away from home. New home. Presence and Absence. Past and Present. Future. Such are the issues that are being addressed here. Furthermore, the complex task is not made any easier by the nature of the exercise. Researchers have indicated the difficulty in making a

'comprehensive assessment of the resettlement of these [Afro-Brazilian] freed slaves and their descendants.'[7] Dearth of archival material, absence of reliable library and data; death of the human repositories of history: such are the insurmountable problems. Amadou Hampâté Bâ once stated: 'In Africa, an old man that dies is a library that burns.'[8] Such are the vagaries of oral tradition, especially when, in addition to the sad departure of generations of participants and custodians of true history, those available are reluctant to cooperate for fear of the researcher's objectives, or out of a tradition of respect for the dead and for family secrets. Bernardine Evaristo, of Brazilian-Nigerian descent, went to Lagos in search of her family history. She came away somewhat frustrated, 'There isn't the tradition of record-keeping which we have here in the UK, and I only have third and fourth cousins remaining over there. And as these very old relatives said that they didn't like to talk of the dead, it was really hard to get any information out of them. I have a ninety-something-year-old fourth cousin who used to have photographs of my father as a child, but a few years back rain seeped in through her roof and destroyed them.'[9]

Evaristo discovered that her father's childhood home in the Brazilian Quarter (Portuguese Town) was far different from the massive, majestic structure of his imagination. 'Instead it was a small bungalow with a porch and the occupants thought I had come to claim the property, so they produced the original sale document of the house from my grandmother to their family in the 1940s'. This example shows not only the pitfalls of resuscitating and nurturing memory, but also the trauma and tragedy of its loss, or perversion. While we are still wading through the murky waters of exhuming memory of the Afro-Brazilian presence in Lagos, we bear in mind the earlier findings of a colleague, Tundonu Amosu, that the once vibrant community and a major economic force in Lagos more or less disappeared, 'finished so poorly that today, their many achievements only feature in the nostalgic recollections of some families located in central Lagos. It is quite possible that things would have been different if, like the other Brazilians who settled on the west coast towns of Porto Novo and Ouidah among others, those in Lagos had chosen to be allies of the dominant colonial power.'[10] According to another scholar of the subject, Elisée Soumonni, 'returnees from Brazil found a more familiar environment in Ouidah than in Lagos.' He mentions, among others, the important factor and influence of the famous Brazilian slave trader and associate of King Ghezo, Francisco Félix de Souza.[11] One more observation would serve us well here: 'The development of Lagos as the primary port in the region, accompanied as it was by the imposition of British colonial rule,

the return of Sierra Leonean liberated slaves, and the arrival of northern European Protestant missionaries, led to the rapid development there of a complex, cosmopolitan colonial world in which the former slaves from Brazil were only one among several significant external influences. The Brazilian population there did not remain as powerful as at Ouidah and Porto-Novo, where even after the imposition of French colonial rule it continued to play a formative role in local politics and culture.'[12] These latter observations would explain, to a certain extent, the limited success of the returnees to Lagos. Nonetheless, there would appear to be other factors militating against their long-term presence and survival as a unique, self-identifiable entity. Besides, the relationships between Afro-Brazilian returnees and other groups on the ground would appear to require a more in-depth analysis than has been done until now.

The return to Lagos is a classic combination of the twin tragedies of slavery and colonialism or, more specifically, a classic case of the consequences of a tragedy and a disaster; of the ex-slave and the currently colonized coming in contact, and conflict, with the master to them both. The scenario affords us the unique opportunity to study the complexities of Africa's history and heritage.

We have one other example from which to learn – the American. Between African Americans and Africans there is a widespread tension with regard to what transpired during the infamous Trade. In many a circle, the acrimony reaches the level of rejection and repulsion, fuelled by the image of a savage Africa projected by the West; hence, the notion that 'the best and brightest' were transported to the New World where they became civilized, leaving behind the dim-witted and dumbest. Some African Americans eschew the African epithet, preferring *Black*, thus avoiding the opprobrium of being attached to Africa.[13]

While the American example informs us of the reality of conflict and contempt within the extended African family, it also raises other issues and distinctions. Brazil is not the United States, and the African American's experience, constant and continuous, perpetually anchored upon American self-acclaimed and nearly universally accepted superiority, has to be distinguished from that of the Afro-Brazilian, deemed to belong to a Third-World nation aspiring to the First, and willingly becoming African again in a relatively short period of time.[14] Still, we must admit that Afro-Brazilian is distinct from African.

Nonetheless, there is every reason to believe that the transition from Brazil to the new African home was less tense than tenable, less traumatizing than tantalizing, less negative than positive. By the middle of

the nineteenth century when Afro-Brazilians returned to Lagos in large numbers, there was another group sharing the space with them, the Saros. There were also the Europeans, colonial officers and the private sector. And, of course, there were the indigenes of Lagos that they all met in the famous town. The events of the mid-eighties lay out the socio-political and cultural situation among the four groups.

Consequential to the British ousting of the Lagos Oba Kosoko in 1851 and his replacement with the more collaborating and malleable Akitoye, Lagos was annexed as a colony in 1861. The British administrator dispossessed the indigenes of the best land mass where their property was destroyed, and new structures, system of administration, and overall *weltanschauung* were imposed. Cole (*Modern and Traditional Elites*, p. 10) describes the new order thus, 'This dispossession, which forced the indigenes further back towards the north-western end of Lagos Island, set the pattern of settlements on Lagos. Saros, liberated Africans from Sierra Leone, settled west of the Europeans on the Marine, while Brazilian and Cuban emancipados[15] settled *behind* both the Saros and the Europeans.' (emphasis is mine)

Cole provides statistics of the Lagos population in the 1880s: 3,221 Brazilians (from 300 in 1862); 1,533 Sierra Leoneans (there were more in the interior); 111 Europeans (from 42 in 1866); 32,593 indigenes. As attested to by the above description of residence, there was a hierarchical order, much in line with colonial configurations: Europeans stayed in front, or at the top of the hill, and others settled below them, with the indigenes at the back, or bottom.[16] Let us again quote Cole, 'In the 1880s there were four distinct groups in Lagos – the Europeans, the educated Africans (Saros), the Brazilians and the indigenes. The town was physically divided into four quarters corresponding to these groups. The Europeans lived on the Marina, the Saros mainly *west* of the Europeans in an area called Olowogbowo, the Brazilians *behind* the Europeans. Their quarter was known as Portuguese Town or Popo Aguda or Popo Maro, and the indigenes on the rest of the island – *behind* all three.' (pp. 45-6, emphasis mine)

We deem it necessary to contemplate the Aguda presence in Lagos in four parts:

Afro-Brazilians and indigenes
Afro-Brazilians and Saros
Afro-Brazilians and Europeans
Afro-Brazilians and Lagos Obas

This last connection gives us an insight into the general reception of the new arrivals. The spectacular architectural skills of Brazilians were so well recognized on the west coast of Africa that Oba Kosoko of Lagos tried in 1849 to bring carpenters and coopers to his town. In 1847, he had sent his adviser, Chief Oshodi Tapa, to Brazil to invite ex-slaves with Yoruba ancestry to return home. That trip led to the arrival of some 130 returnees in 1851. During the following decade, his successor, Akitoye, granted land to a number of them. The overall impression is that the returnees were more welcome than not, and that they did not have much difficulty in settling down.[17] One would assert that Lagos was not a hostile environment. One also wonders whether Kosoko's removal by the British was not connected to his policy of favouring the returnees from Brazil, while he was at loggerheads with the Saros. And one would agree with Ralston that 'the absorption of these people into African society came rather quickly, on the whole [and] that one hundred per cent absorption of the repatriates into African society did not occur.' While it is true that some, frustrated, returned to Brazil, it is also true that the majority stayed and succeeded at various levels of Lagosian society, with some attaining the highest echelon. In the 1890s, the Owa of Ilesha was a Brazilian expatriate (Cole, p. 206).

In estimating the relationship between Agudas and indigenes, some researchers affirm that while indigenes were hostile to all non-indigenes, grouped together as 'immigrants, foreigners, visitors or unwanted interlopers,' 'the Saros excited the deepest hostility from the indigenes' (Cole, p. 48). The British consul, Campbell, explained the exacerbated hostility as a result of jealousy of the Saros' superior intelligence and civilization-Europeanization. Indeed, the Saros lived like Victorian gentlemen profusely loyal to the British crown, and 'showed a compulsive need to be accepted and respected by the Whites' (Cole, p. 48). They looked down upon the indigenes and were condescending enough to claim that Lagos was an offshoot of Sierra Leone.

It is noteworthy that Cole and others have often made general assertions on both Agudas and Saros, whereas it would be most useful to make a distinction. A possible situation would be that the Saros, due to their pomposity and Europhilia, would be less easy to accept than the Agudas; an irony of sorts, since the Saros, in closer contact with home than the Agudas, would appear to enjoy an advantage in settling down. Let us emphasize that the Saros were rescued en route across the Atlantic, that they did not reach the other side, and they could easily identify their Yoruba family connections. In terms of their relationship with the indigenous population, that advantage would be diminished by the disadvantage of

Western education: an educated elite wearing stiff collars and made-for-winter suits, they stood for the best in British decorum and alienated themselves from the indigenous society.

Contrary to the opinion of some critics, we would refrain from clamping the stigma of 'foreigners' on both Agudas and Saros. We would also hesitate to believe that, by and large, indigenes considered them in the same light as Europeans. Furthermore, it would be confusing to place Agudas and Saros together as 'an educated elite [and] a rising bourgeoisie' (Soumonni, in *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions*, p. 184). Due to their cultural affinity with Europeans, Saros would be more 'foreign' than Agudas. Given their Western education (with their Egba ethnicity, they came to be first in many professions in Nigeria, such as law, medicine, civil service, and clergy, with Ajayi Crowder as the first Archbishop) and cultural orientation, Saros were no doubt more elitist than Agudas. The latter, we recall, were mainly technically skilled artisans (renowned architects of beautiful structures) and, like Saros, commercial intermediaries between European companies and local producers in the hinterland. The claim here is that their level of education was not as high and Euro-centric/centered as that of Saros, and that they were therefore at a lower rung of the social ladder, and closer to the indigenes.[18] How does one explain the viewpoint of Consul Campbell in the 1850s, that Agudas 'were far more culturally assimilable to the indigenes than the Sierra Leoneans'? (in Cole, p. 49) The colonial officer was actually implying that the former were not as civilized as the Saros.

Assimilability does not mean assimilation; just as Afro-Brazilian does not translate into African. It is on record that Agudas were desirous of asserting their distinct identity in their new home. It is also important that their descendants in today's society show pride in their exemplary qualities. The following instance is proof of how history can easily be transformed into hagiography by family pride. Angelica Yewande Oyediran, great-granddaughter of João Esan da Rocha, an 1870 returnee who made a fortune in commerce and whose son, Candido, took after him in fame and fortune, comments: 'They [returnees] were determined to come home, and they were forced into high discipline. They easily outshone the people at home. If you had any work to do, you called on a Brazilian descendant to make sure it was done right' (web article, 'In Nigeria, Touches of Brazilian Style'). The Agudas did outshine indigenes in building houses, and excelled in other areas, the expertise for which they brought back from the Diaspora. But Oyediran's statement would rub many up the wrong way.

Education, religion, and language issues are three major areas where the Aguda presence and identity can be viably discussed and assessed. In

the 1860s, repatriates at Lagos followed the example of Ouidah to have the Italian, Reverend Father Borghero-led, *Société des missions africaines de Lyon* establish churches and schools, due to their 'attachment to the Portuguese language and culture.' (Soumonni, in *Africa and the Americas*, p. 237). The demise of Portuguese language in the twentieth century has been the subject of discussion. It is adduced either to the successful challenge of French assimilation and British indirect rule policies, or to the failure of Afro-Brazilians in maintaining, and insisting on, their interest as repositories of Lusophone culture. Our position is that Portuguese language did not belong to Afro-Brazilian repatriates; it constituted an imposition.[19] Therefore, their allegiance to it, if it flagged, might not necessarily be a lamentable loss as a cultural symbol or identity. As a Yoruba people, the returnees would be deemed to have achieved full-fledged, legitimate 'home-coming' by adopting, and adapting to, Yoruba language and culture. If we consider the fortunes of Yoruba in Bahia, the returnees' other home, we note that it has become more or less effete, mired in a similar condition of oblivion. Of course, it would have been most appropriate and commendable if the two languages had survived on both sides of the Atlantic. That would have been to the advantage of all. Under the circumstances, given the socio-political and cultural realities, the death of Portuguese in Lagos would be logical. The phenomenon might also be viewed as one more example of goals and effects of the twin enterprise of slavery and colonialism: like Caliban, the colonized is compelled to learn the master's language according to the latter's instructions and conditions and only in exceptional cases does he, colonized with a warped mind and distorted perspective, have the clear notion of what he wants and needs. The British colonial administration's policy of cultural imperialism helped to kill the Portuguese language in the Lagos colony.

With regard to religion, available data show that most Lagos residents in 1868 were 'animist' (that is, practiced traditional religion), '14,797 as opposed to 8,422 Muslims and 3,970 Christians' (Cole, p. 45). Although some critics believe that the Catholic Agudas experienced intolerance at the hand of indigenes, one would beg to differ, given the very fact of Yoruba cultural tolerance, the real explanation for the variety of faiths within the community and inside a given family. Such tolerance, adaptability and flexibility would also explain the ease with which slaves perfected the famous posture of syncretism that fooled the master into believing that they had submitted their souls to the Christian God, while rejecting their so-called savage deities. As has been stated, Agudas were not only Catholics; they were simultaneously worshipers of Orisa (Candomblé) and Moslems

(combatants in the Malê rebellion). Cole (p.2) comments on religious openness and flexibility in Lagos, 'The individual in Lagos appealed to any one of the various brands of religion, individually or collectively depending on his needs, and on which religion he judged would be more efficacious for the problem at hand.'

It is significant that, notwithstanding the visible all-consuming desire of the Saros to imitate the Europeans and thus gain their respect and acceptance as partners, or their favoured subordinates in the colony, the latter did not allow them to attain their political goals. We have submitted earlier that Afro-Brazilians, being less privileged than Saros, could not be expected to have the same impact on the society. The Saros raised the ire of the Europeans because, as members of the colonized group, they aspired to a level considered beyond their capabilities, or rights. In short, colonialism, even as it claimed to civilize the colonized, even as it relished its influence on the upper stratum being trained to represent its culture and interests, never forgot to keep its distance. The Saros, 'trousered Africans,' were not White. S.M. Brown (*History of the Peoples of Lagos*, pp. 29-30) summarizes the irony of the relationship between Europeans and Saros, 'The bearer of western civilization to the benighted African found that it more often debased than elevated. Whether missionary, explorer, trader or government official, he usually admired the native character and cults more than the hybrid pattern slowly emerging along the coast.' The implicit message: the European master would, in the final analysis, prefer that all Africans remain savages, while those he has been kind enough to elevate beyond the state of apes and monkeys would persist in trying to become his equals as full-fledged, civilized humans. The Saros did not help their selfish cause by becoming increasingly political: 'Africa for the Africans,' was their motto. However, what they lost in personal ambition constituted a big gain for the community; for they emerged as the avant-garde in the struggle for independence.

Afro-Brazilians did not play as central a role in the politics of Lagos as did Saros, for obvious reasons. Issues of language and religion, the educational platform, questions of class in leadership, all vital in the political equation, tilted the pendulum in the Saro direction. In addition, the new social distinctions of the twentieth century made for a more unified action among the colonized, which makes it difficult to ascertain various identities. In essence, instead of four groups in Lagos (Europeans – Saros – Agudas – indigenes), there were now two: Whites (Europeans) against Blacks (Lagosians). Colonialism, more racist and exclusivist than ever, awakened the conscience and consciousness of the colonized, who saw the necessity

to unite in opposition to claim their rights and, ultimately, freedom. Names of front-liners in the struggle abound; among them, Herbert Macaulay and Henry Carr, of Saro extraction, and Placido Adeyemo Alakija[20], Aguda. It should, however, be stated that the former were more active and activist in the political arena than the latter.

An analysis of the Saro involvement reveals the dangerous potential, and indeed presence, of confusion and collaboration within the colonized ranks. In education and politics, there were two opposing groups; pro-Yoruba and anti-Yoruba. One group supported the colonial master, while another stood up to him. On the whole, the Saros were disillusioned not to have attained the heights that they had envisioned for themselves in colonial Lagos and, before they came to accept the realignment of the modern elite with the traditional elite in the anti-colonial struggle, they had stood against the 'Africanists' who condemned them as imitators of Europeans. Macaulay and Carr represented the two opposite poles of political ideology; the first, nationalist, the second, assimilationist. For their part, Afro-Brazilians were not engaged in the controversial political game and grandstanding. It has been argued that 'by refusing to embrace the more relevant aspects of the British system ... they created a gap in their artistic and economic fortunes with the attendant political consequences.' (Amosu p. 49). As enunciated above, our opinion is that the British system, colonial and therefore exploitative and dehumanizing vis-a-vis the colonized, was not worth embracing.

Furthermore, the Afro-Brazilians, marginalized from the start, had to deal with the double dilemma of slavery and colonialism, even as their manumission from the former estate created another level of confusion marked by a certain delusion of grandeur. That would at least partially explain what Amosu calls 'the negative attitude of the returnees towards the natives who, in turn, despised those who forgot they had been sold in the first place!'[21] Perhaps they were more interested in commerce and trade, in socio-economic and cultural spheres.[22] For example, their impact on property remains all-encompassing and unique. It was they who took land away from its traditionally communal domain, into the individual/individualistic arena of commodification. They bought land, developed houses, rented and sold them. Their innovative contribution might have been a source of resentment but, in the long run, they forever changed the Lagosians' way of life.

There is no doubt that the Agudas left their indelible mark on the Lagos landscape. In addition to the living generations of da Rocha, Alakija, McGregor, da Silva, Marinho, Campos, Pedro, that is enough to lay

claim to an everlasting presence. To talk of Brazil in Lagos is to talk, first and foremost, of that distinct baroque architecture, the stucco, brightly configured façades and sturdy columns. The glorious achievements of master-builders, craftsmen, masons, dating as far back as the eighteenth century, include: Iga Idungaran (Oba's palace), Balogun Oshodi Tapa Monument, Taiwo Olowo's Monument, Water House (seat of Esan da Rocha's family), Shitta Mosque and the Holy Cross Cathedral (first named *Igreja do Bonfim*). Prominent among the builders was Marcos Cardoso, credited for constructing the first spiral stairway in Lagos. Brazilians introduced two-storey buildings. Their architecture evinced the vaunted European model supposedly meant to civilize the tastes of the local populace. In addition, the returnees introduced cassava into agriculture and the culinary and dietary culture, harbinger of the now staple food of the Yoruba, as well as millions of other Nigerians: *gari*, and the famous Lagosian *frejon*, the local version of the bean-made *feijão*, one of the regular meals in Candomblé *terreiros*. They led the cultivation of cocoa plantations. The popular bean-based *akara*, of Lagosian origin, has found its way back to Bahia as *akaraje*, and the reverse movement is indubitable proof of the continuity of culture and the perennial presence of deep-rooted relationships.

Earlier, we quoted the statement by Esan da Rocha's great-granddaughter, Yewande Oyediran, in which she asserted the returnees' high discipline and quality of work, personal and professional pride and, indeed, superiority which, no doubt, the indigenes could read as pomposity and a superiority complex. Other comments on the conduct of the Agudas support this assessment. For example, Amosu (p. 48) avers that they 'remained very faithful to the Brazilian life-style of flamboyant spending.' He continues: 'It is said that when paper money was first introduced to the colony, some profligates proceeded to light them as cigars!' Our knowledge of Afro-Brazil has not revealed a life-style of exhibitionist ostentation and excesses. If Afro-Brazilians in Lagos revelled in profligacy and materialistic madness, it might be due to a combination of their character and that of the indigenous community. It needs to be noted that ceremony and celebration, exuding joy in bright, colourful atmosphere marked by dance and music, are part and parcel of Yoruba culture itself. Such exuberance has often translated into exhibitionism and excess. Realities of millennial Lagos attest to the process of caricaturing culture, fossilizing it by stripping it of its heart and soul to retain a skeleton, symbolized by expensive *aso ebi* (uniform attire worn on special occasions by a group expressing their solidarity and unity and wealth) and *spraying* (pressing crisp, new money bills,

including dollars, pounds and euros, on the faces and bodies of musicians and celebrants). In short, one might say that Afro-Brazilian exhibitionism has been complemented by that of their indigene cousins.

Alaba Simpson's well-documented article, 'The Politics of Culture and Diaspora Settlement in Lagos: Ethnographic Presentation of the African Brazilian Fanti/Caretta Carnival,'[23] offers an analysis of the Aguda cultural presence in Lagos. He submits that the Fanti carnival is a result of the experience of 'exclusion' and 'seclusion' in Lagos. We quote: 'The strains that were involved in the adjustment procedures motivated the Diaspora community to seek solace in the performance of the Caretta carnival which was a socio-cultural activity that was practiced by them during the time of slavery in Brazil.' The researcher also states that the Agudas and indigenes had 'different customs' which made for some difficulty in establishing the carnival, and led to a sort of bastardization through the incursion of local cultural habits.

An important point is that Afro-Brazilians were excluded from carnival (*carnaval*) back in Brazil.[24] Just as they had suffered oppression and repression for their Africa-centred religion[25], they would not be considered owners of carnavalesque mores. It is also interesting that the Fanti carnival came to be labelled violent, a stigma that would recall the experience of Afro-Brazilians at the turn of the century, in the context of both *carnaval* and Candomblé. The consolation is that, after years of sclerosis, the carnival culture has been revived and adapted to the particularities of the Lagos milieu (for example, Fanti alludes to Togolese and Ghanaian settlers), while maintaining elements of the original model. The carnival has inculcated aspects of other cultural practices, such as the cane in Egungun, and the ritual stick, *opambata*, of Eyo festivals.

The carnival songs in Simpson's study express the participants' pride and superiority, and opposition between rival groups. Of greater import are the themes of the occasion, for example, a male participant in the 1990s bearing the message, 'No more soldier – welcome Democracy.' It shows that culture is political, and brings to mind the state of carnival in Brazil.

The rivalry between Afro-Brazilians and the local community over details of the carnival is, fortunately, less than before. According to Simpson, it caused friction that led to a comatose period. The introduction of the *Family Pride* concept in the 1990s not only shows progressive consciousness of community beyond Aguda and indigenous families, but constitutes another possible means of creating a trans-Atlantic African culture: Family Pride celebration in Lagos would be linked to Black Heritage Weekend and

Kwanzaa in the United States, just as Caretta Carnival would dovetail into Brazil's *carnaval*, Notting Hill's spectacular festival, New Orleans' Mardi Gras, Toronto's Caribana. Instead of rivalries, there would be cultural complementarity, adaptation and integration, a question of continuities and reciprocity.

Simpson offers a useful study of Aguda-indigene relationship in his comment on songs and sayings. Let us take a couple of examples here. *Jaguda je gbaguda Aguda*, a tongue-twisting saying – that the thief has eaten the cassava belonging to Aguda. The tongue-twister itself would make one wary of taking the semantics too seriously. Nonetheless, as Simpson asserts, the saying 'illustrates the elitist status' of the Afro-Brazilians: rich, sophisticated, and potential target for thieves. Another saying is, *Aguda ko je l'abe Geesi, owo l'o pa won po* – Aguda do not owe their daily subsistence to the British, their relationship is based upon exchange of money (that is, business deals). It underlines the economic autonomy and power of the Aguda, not beholden to the Britons in the colony, in contrast with the underling position of the indigenes. Of course, the statement would imply that such divide could be a source of acrimony between the two colonized groups.

All in all, there is reason to believe that the Afro-Brazilian returnees to Lagos have left a strong legacy in their new home, and that 'the jaded heritage' (Amosu) has left remnants of deep-rooted joy for posterity, with possibilities for renewal. The nineteenth century return was an eventful homecoming from exile, a return far from smooth, a bumpy road or, not minding the risk of being accused of cynicism, like driving on Lagos's notorious pot-holed arteries. In reality, we daresay there is nothing extreme in the experience of those ex-slaves welcomed into the midst of another, albeit minor enslavement.

In spite of myriad issues of conflict between them and the indigenes, and their counterparts as repatriates, the Saros and Agudas were generally responsible citizens who settled down and contributed to what Lagos has become today. Their architectural achievements remain monumental, indelible symbols of excellence and points of reference. The disappearance of the Portuguese language would be expected in Britain's colonial empire. Yet, one cannot but lament the loss of that unique opportunity to learn one more language of the oppressor, useful as a tool in the struggle against imperialism: so as to better know and fight against your enemy, you should learn his ways, notwithstanding the dangers of assimilation. In today's Nigeria, many are ignorant of the once vibrant Afro-Brazilian presence. We recall that episode of the football match, followed by the famous

FESTAC 77 (see Amosu, p. 43), when the official Brazilian delegation muzzled their undesirable, activist, Black compatriots, such as Abdias do Nascimento[26], who wanted to lift the mask of 'racial democracy' to reveal the racist face of mulatto Brazil. Abdias's visit to the then University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, OAU) was a prelude to the establishment of a Portuguese programme at that institution's department of foreign languages. The programme was anchored on links with Afro-Brazil in Salvador-Bahia, with Nigerian students spending their year abroad at Universidade Federal da Bahia. OAU bought a house for lodging its students at Salvador, and the link has thrived over the years. One might arguably declare that it is all part of the heritage of the Agudas in Nigeria.

Let us recall that other episode when Christian professors visited religious shrines in Bahia. Their ignorance and intolerance would go in tandem with the consequences of Britain's 'civilizing mission' in Lagos. Again, we insist that Yoruba culture dictates tolerance, and such would be the mores of the slaves in Bahia and those who returned home. Today's Lagos and Nigeria, microcosm of Africa, macrocosm of aspirations to modernity, must amaze many an Afro-Brazilian looking up to those from the ancestral home to collaborate in the quest for survival and progress in a global village, hardly taking cognizance of Africa's (continent and Diaspora) presence, desires, and needs. And, if anyone wonders why this attempt at 'globalization,' let it be said that the saga of Afro-Brazilians in Lagos cannot be divorced from that of other migrants of the African world.

By fully understanding the Afro-Brazilian story in Lagos, we remind ourselves of the complexities and confusion of our lives and destinies. We also note the peculiar politics of Nigeria where Yoruba, a major presence in the Diaspora, has but a relatively minor influence.[27] One wonders what would happen were the powers that be in Nigeria to accord the culture its proper place.

Exile, and forgetfulness. Loss of memory. After all, myopia and amnesia are lessons that are systematically pounded into our very receptive brains as a mark of civilization; if we forget our shared history and heritage, if we think and act as individuals, we would be ready to join the modern train and embark upon the path of progress. We would respond to such propaganda by quoting an Afro-Brazilian, Abdias, 'Since all documents on our African origin have been destroyed by the Portuguese, we African Brazilians claim the whole of Africa as our motherland' (*Being Black, Being Human*, p. 270).

I would leave you with the following lines from a poem of mine:

exile
is
having a house but not a home
having a choice to go somewhere but with nowhere to go
wanting to go home but not daring to go
home exile
is heaven
and
hell
(Exile at Home, p. 8)

May all African exiles find their way back home.

ENDNOTES

1. See Ojo-Ade, *Configuring the African World* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007) p. 170.
2. For an in-depth analysis of the theme of exile, see Ojo-Ade, 'Living in Paradise,' chapter XIII of *Configuring the African World*, pp. 209-224.
3. Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1971) pp. 98/100.
4. Elisée Soumonni, 'The Afro-Brazilian Communities of Ouidah and Lagos in the Nineteenth Century: A Comparative Analysis,' in José C. Curto and Renée Soulodre-La France (eds), *Africa and the Americas: Interconnections during the Slave Trade* (Africa World Press, 2005) p. 231.
5. Eko, war camp of the Benin king who came to rule over the area occupied by the Awori who used to call the place Oko, farm land. See 'Who are the real Lagosians?' (OSHODI.ORG); Patrick Cole, *Modern and traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos* (Cambridge University Press) p. 1975.
6. Ojo-Ade, *Configuring*, p. 59. The major terreiros in Salvador-Bahia (Ile Axe Opo Afonja, Gantua, Casa Branca, Alaketu, etc.) have always accorded a warm welcome to Yoruba visitors. The close relationship forged over the years is largely due to the establishment of the International Congress of Orisa Tradition at Ile-Ife in 1981. The president is Professor Wande Abimbola, world renowned priest and scholar of Ifa.
7. Soumonni, 'The Afro-Brazilian Communities of the Bight of Benin in the Nineteenth Century,' in Paul E. Lovejoy and David V. Trotman (eds), *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora* (New York: Continuum, 2003) p. 185.

8. Quoted by Djibril Tamsir Niane, 'L'Homme noir culpabilisé,' in Makhily Gassama, dir., *L'Afrique répond à Sarkozy* (Paris: Eds Philippe Rey, 2008) p. 328; French – English translation done by us.
9. 'On the Road: Bernardine Evaristo interviewed by Karen Hooper,' *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, vol. 41(1), 2006, p. 5.
10. Tundonu Amosu, 'The Jaded Heritage: Nigeria's Brazilian Connection,' in *Africa: Revista do Centro de Estudos Africanos da USP*, 10, 1987, p. 44. We are in the process of interviewing living members of Afro-Brazilian families in Lagos. In the meantime, our analysis here is based mainly on existing studies and our evaluation of relationships between returnees and the local community. This is where our opinion sometimes significantly differs from that of other researchers.
11. 'Communities', p. 233.
12. Robin Law and Kristin Mann, 'West Africa in the Atlantic Community: The Case of the Slave Coast,' in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 56 no. 2(April 1999), p. 333.
13. Some interesting texts exist on the subject:
    Keith B. Richburg, *Out of America* (BasicBooks, 1997).
    Eddy L. Harris, *Native Stranger* (Vintage, 1992).
14. It is an open secret that the powers that be in Brazil have for long tried to claim attachment to Europe, in spite of their acceptance of mulattohood. There was an official immigration policy of attracting Europeans while African Americans were unacceptable. Indeed, in this new millennium, the profile of Brazil projected to the world remains Eurocentric; for instance, on television, Blacks are given space mainly in sports, and playing the roles of underlings in other spheres. In the hierarchy of race and colour, there are hundreds of shades, with Black, preto, stuck at the bottom. Interestingly, the nomenclature, negro, became common only with the activism of the new Negritude movement. Many that one would consider Black prefer to be called moreno.
    See David J. Hellwig, ed., African-American Reflections on Brazil's Racial Paradise (Temple University Press, 1992); Abdias do Nascimento, Africans in Brazil (Africa World Press, 1992); Ojo-Ade, Being Black, Being Human (Africa World Press, 2004).
15. Note that Brazilian and Cuban returnees are generally lumped together as *Agudas* and *Amaros*. It would be interesting to find out why, and to see whether a distinction could be made between the two. Perhaps the combination is due to the similarity between Spanish and Portuguese and, indeed, the cultural and political affinity of the two peoples. Spanish and Portuguese royalties were, after all, family, and both were mutually involved in the discovery, exploration, and exploitation of Africa through the slave trade.

Aguda, Yoruba coinage, refers generally to Catholicism, Brazil's official religion. As Amosu explains, the term also refers to the statement of intent of the first priests: *vamos ajudar* (we are going to help).

16. The Yoruba terminology, *oke oyinbo* (the White man's hill), expresses the notion, physically and symbolically: the European stays in the best part of town, on the heights, above the rest of the colonized community.
17. For example, Soumonni sees less tension and trouble, while Amosu sees more. The former makes a comparison between Lagos and Ouidah, and between Agudas and Saros, concluding in both cases that Agudas were disadvantaged at Lagos, a less conducive place for their settlement than Ouidah. We would argue that the deck was stacked against Afro-Brazilians in Lagos, a British colony with Protestantism as religion and English as official language; that Saros, English-speaking slaves saved from the pogrom of the trans-Atlantic plantation experience and in closer contact with home, were in a better position to adapt and settle than the Brazilians; that Ouidah, in a French colony with a king, Ghezo, supported by a very influential Brazilian ally and slave dealer, de Souza, leading a well established community, was, indeed, better equipped for their return than Lagos.
18. In discussing the Agudas' education, Ralston ('The Return of Brazilian Freedmen to West Africa in the 18th and 19th Centuries,' in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 3 No. 3, Autumn 1969, p. 584) talks of 'at least to the degree of literacy.' He also quotes J.F. Ade Ajayi's position that 'the first generation of educated middle class persons were important pioneers in the emergence of a Nigerian nationalism.' He continues to quote Ajayi: 'This group was generally not educated in Nigeria at all but in Freetown, Cuba, and Brazil.' Here, then, is another example of generalization where, we believe, distinction should be made.
19. Soumonni states that 'Afro-Brazilians of the [west coast] lost in the process an original feature of their identity' (in *Trans-Atlantic Dimensions*, p. 192). Law and Mann ('West Africa...,' p. 327) mention the link between the Portuguese language and Catholicism although, according to them, the latter was not necessarily a signifier of Brazilian identity. The survival of the latter and the disappearance of the former would underscore the insignificance of a complementarity. The Portuguese language is not specific to the Catholic religion. The political factor would be much more relevant.
For an in-depth assessment of religious tolerance (conciliation of Christianity, Islam and Ifa), see Olabiyi B. Yai, 'The Identity, Contributions, and Ideology of the Aguda (Afro-Brazilians) of the Gulf of Benin: A Reinterpretation,' *Slavery and Abolition* 22(2001), pp. 72-82.
20. Placido Adeyemo Alakija's family is one of those that have kept the Lagos-

Bahia connection alive. The Yoruba name is still being used by the family in Bahia: the elder, George, a prominent medical doctor, died recently. His daughter, Ana, journalist, is currently researching the family history in collaboration with us. Alakija descendants are living in the European Diaspora of the Netherlands. Data from the research are being analyzed with a view to publishing a book.

Placido, Knight of the British Empire, was a lawyer, businessman, co-founder of the *Daily Times*, member of the legislative council, president of the Nigerian Youth Movement, and an adviser to Oba Adele of Lagos who ascended to the throne in 1949. He was also one of the politicians propagating cultural nationalism in the early twentieth century. He co-founded the reformed Ogboni fraternity, a secret cultural and political organization committed to advancing the Yoruba cause in colonial Nigeria. He died in 1952.

The Alakija family was one of the most prominent Aguda families in Lagos.

21. The tension between descendants of slaves from the Diaspora and continental Africans is a bone of contention (see note 13 for comments on African Americans). An honest, heart-to-heart discussion between both sides, not moderated by the West, is long overdue. A revisionist reading of history by Euro-America appears to be the currently common perspective: Africans are guiltier than Europeans; they should apologize for selling their own into slavery. We read in the history of Lagos that the British colonizers, magnanimous and humanistic abolitionists, did marvelously well to curb the monstrous, materialistic machine cultivated by Oba Kosoko of Lagos. They bombarded Lagos in 1851 and annexed it as a colony in 1861.
22. Part of the ongoing research by this scholar would be efforts to clarify the Afro-Brazilians' political activities. Their Brazilian background might have constituted a deterrent, and given the advantage to the British oriented and politically trained Saros and indigenes.
23. June 2007 Newsletter; http://www.diaspora.uiuc.edu/news0607/news0607.html.
24. The evolution of Brazilian *carnaval*, now an annual multi-million-dollar machine, is an essential aspect of the changing fortunes of Afro-Brazilians. Once excluded and left on the verge, they are now at the centre of the cultural experience which annually 'allows' everyone to freely and fully express themselves, realize their most cherished dreams as full-fledged human beings and citizens of an egalitarian, non-racial, non-racist society. It is three days in 'paradise' for which people spend a whole year preparing. It is expensive, but of such importance that the poorest are prepared to spend their last real (Brazil's monetary unit) in order to participate.

See Ojo-Ade, *Being Black, Being Human*, pp. 259-260;
Ojo-Ade, *Configuring*, pp. 240-241.

25. In Bahia, there are still reports of religious intolerance by officialdom and fundamentalist Christians who harass worshipers, burn down shrines, and make life impossible. Bahia has an organization working against religious intolerance.

    Researchers of the Aguda presence in Lagos have to note that Catholicism, while being the major and more or less official religion of Brazil, is not necessarily accepted in absolute terms as their own faith.

26. Consult Ojo-Ade, *Being Black, Being Human*, pp. 267-271, interview with Abdias.

27. Reports indicate that the Lagos State government is working with the private sector to conserve Brazilian architecture, and the Brazilian Descendants' Union seems to be re-inventing itself. On the other hand, the Nigerian government does not recognize the trans-Atlantic impact and importance of Yoruba culture. For instance, the government of Bahia gave a building to Nigeria several years ago, for the promotion of culture in that centre of African presence, but Nigeria left the place in such a disgraceful shape that Bahia decided to take it back. Negotiations are ongoing to see whether Nigeria would fulfill the promise to make the place a symbol of cultural pride. We are convinced that it has to do with cultural politics.

12

AFRO-BRAZILIANS IN LAGOS: Atlantic Commerce, Kinship and Trans-Nationalism

OLATUNJI OJO

Economic and cultural relations between West Africa and Brazil have spanned nearly six centuries. The initial basis of this relationship was the trade in gold and ivory, and later the Atlantic slave trade which transported about a million people from West Africa, especially Yorubaland, to Brazil. Brazilian traders and capital moved in the opposite direction. During the early nineteenth century, the predominance of Yoruba in the Brazilian northeast province of Bahia resulted in widespread Yoruba culture and revolts led by Nago slaves. Following one of these revolts in 1835, the rebels, mostly freed Yoruba slaves, were severely punished with death sentencing, flogging and jail terms. In addition, Brazilian authorities ordered the deportation of suspected rebels and many freed slaves. The deportation order, followed by massive voluntary emigration of former slaves to Africa split many families, with some members going to Africa, while others stayed in Brazil. In Africa, the returnees, called Afro-Brazilians, settled in scattered Western African port towns that spread from Liberia to Angola. From the port towns, others inched their way into the interior. Collectively, Afro-Brazilians in West Africa formed the Aguda communities in Nigeria, Benin and Togo,[1] and the Tabom of Ghana.[2] Familial and historical links enabled continuous cultural, economic and kinship exchanges which are now widely recognized to underpin Yoruba cultural influence like *Santeria* in Bahia, the birth of Afro-Brazilian networks, and Nago (Yoruba) identity in Nigeria and Benin republics.

Legacies of the links between Nigeria and Brazil, especially Bahia, have been well covered in the literature. But the scope of academic discussion tended to be confined to the era of the slave trade and the Aguda community in Benin Republic, which was privileged because of the importance of Ouidah as West Africa's leading slave port.[3] Less is known about the Aguda in Lagos, independent of their ties to Brazil. For instance, what was the composition of this community? In a recent study, Robin Law traces the

Aguda factor in Benin to the seventeenth century when the King of Allada, the leading kingdom on the Slave Coast, despatched a Portuguese speaking consul, Mateo Lopes, to France. Even though Lopes' ethnicity or race is unknown, he was most probably an immigrant or returnee, rather than local born.[4] While the history of Afro-Brazilian relations in Lagos is not as old as Ouidah, this paper also dates the birth of the Lagos-Aguda community not later than the eighteenth century, when Lagos sent an ambassador to Bahia. In later years, such exchanges included students, artisans, family and diplomats criss-crossing the Atlantic. This paper traces the origin of the Aguda community in Lagos, and investigates the extent to which the community constitutes a pan-Atlantic project. How did local socio-political currents affect the community? It argues that the dispersal and creation of an Afro-Brazilian Diaspora in Nigeria, unlike the picture of a homogenous group common in the literature, is a reflection of how ethno-political factors, amongst others, transformed the community. Although the various trade connections (which the Aguda descendants maintained during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) have ceased to be their monopoly, the family links engendered by the slave trade remains exclusively theirs. Finally, the paper draws attention to the scattered Afro-Brazilian settlements in West Africa, and how the operations of this community underpin a pan-African spirit in the sub-region. While this paper will pursue some of the themes already surveyed by scholars, it also discusses the nexus of market and non-market forces in the shaping of the Aguda community. The paper takes a socio-economic approach using trade records, oral interviews and life histories as trajectories to understanding trade and extra-trade networks as the basis of the Afro-Brazilian legacy.[5] In particular, it explores how life histories illuminate linkages between West Africa and Brazil. The sources allow us to reconstruct the origin of the Lagos Aguda community; that its foundation and membership owed to Africans, Brazilians and Europeans as well; and that the community began to flourish some decades earlier than previously acknowledged.

THE BRAZILIAN FACTOR IN THE YORUBA SLAVE TRADE

The incorporation of Yorubaland into the Atlantic slave trade system had far-reaching repercussions for the region's history. Not only did it lead to heightened political instability, it created the most documented African diasporic community – the Yoruba: Aku in Sierra Leone, Nago in Brazil, Lucumi in Cuba and Aguda, its offshoot in the Bight of Benin. So we could argue that the relationship between Yorubaland and Brazil dated to the era of the slave trade. But unlike other African regions, like Angola and

Ouidah which established contacts not later than the sixteenth century, Yorubaland's direct participation in Atlantic slave trade was hindered by its lack of deepwater anchorages.

In the 1600s, slaves sold by the Yoruba were shipped from Ouidah and Allada to the west. These ports became largely closed to the Yoruba after 1730 when Dahomey, their western neighbour, captured the two ports and prevented the Yoruba from trading directly with Europeans. Dahomey's ascendancy forced the Yoruba to move slaves to other ports; variously to Porto Novo, later Badagry, and finally, in the 1760s, Lagos. Even when the port of Lagos was opened, it took another 30 years before it became a major trade post, and profitable enough to attract traders. The change, in the 1790s, was also not unconnected with Dahomey trade policy. The king of Dahomey had sought greater regulation of trade around their ports, and an end to rivalry posed by nearby ports and traders from other states. In particular, Dahomey wanted to monopolize trade brokerage between Europeans and neighbouring African states. The instability inflicted on trade by Dahomian trade policy (in addition to European wars and French anti-slavery) forced foreign slavers to relocate eastwards to ports beyond Dahomian control, resulting in the rise of Lagos.[6]

If Dahomian trade policies made Lagos more attractive to traders, there was the huge supply of slaves resulting from the outbreak of the Sokoto jihad in the Central Sudan, and the Yoruba wars in 1804 and 1817 respectively. Coincidentally, these war fields were located inland from Lagos, making the port the conveyor belt sending slaves across the Atlantic. Over the next two decades after 1804 the jihad spread throughout the Central Sudan, producing thousands of slaves annually. As Hausa slaves were led through Yorubaland toward Lagos, conflicts erupted between Yoruba chiefs, partly over how to respond to new trade opportunities, and due to resistance by slaves retained in Yorubaland.[7] In 1817, the conflict developed into an open revolt, pitching slaves against their masters and provincial chiefs against their overlords. These conflicts in turn fuelled existing Yoruba political and socio-economic tensions in the region. With the rise of Lagos, Yorubaland became intimately drawn into the slave trade. Its proximity to the Yoruba interior increased the violence associated with slaving, creating an expanding slaving frontier in the interior. Slave trading and violence were mutually reinforcing. Slaving operations intensified regional rivalries; warfare weakened local authorities, boosted soldiering, and pitted soldiers against their monarchs. Yet, politics benefited traders by ensuring security for trade to flourish. Competition for power and prestige in Yorubaland provided a major trade incentive as politicians allied with traders to advance their interests.[8]

Portuguese and Brazilian traders dominated the Yoruba Atlantic trade. References have been made to an Afro-Brazilian, João de Oliveira as the pioneer slave trader between Yorubaland and Brazil. Perhaps it was not fortuitous that he represented Oba Akinsemoyin of Lagos as a trade consul to Bahia in 1770.[9] His activities helped Brazil not only to gain root, but also to emerge as the greatest receiver of Yoruba slaves during the nineteenth century. Although, this eminent position was temporarily lost to the better-capitalized British and French traders between 1800 and 1807, the Brazilians regained their status when Britain and France withdrew from the slave trade in 1808. This allowed Portuguese and Brazilian traders operating in other parts of the Nigerian coast to settle in Lagos. In 1809, for instance, the relocation of Portuguese traders from the Niger Delta to Lagos was not unconnected with the rise of slave trade in the former port.[10]

Warfare produced many slaves and raised exports from Lagos ten fold, making it West Africa's leading slave port during the nineteenth century. The slave voyage database put the number of slaves shipped from Lagos, between 1776 and 1850, at 308,800. Of the number, only 24,000 slaves were shipped before 1801, while 114,200 and 170,600 left during 1801–25 and 1826–50, respectively. Exports from Badagry lagged far behind, with about 37,400 slaves sold during 1776–1850. So entrenched was the Yoruba-Brazil trade that by 1820, Yoruba-speaking slaves had become one of, if not the largest African, ethnic concentrations. Of the 191,977 slaves from the Bight of Benin landed in the Atlantic world between 1801 and 1867, 39,972 or 20.8 per cent went to Bahia; 27,612 or 14.4 per cent to Cuba and 37,972 or 19.7 per cent to Sierra Leone.[11]

The Yoruba wars and effective trade organization made the slave trade generally profitable, and slave ships came to Lagos often. From the slave voyage database (TSD), Brazilian vessels buying slaves from Lagos during the 1820s-1840s rarely sent more than two to complete a voyage. Although British anti-slavery cruisers reduced the time slave ships spent in port towns, Lagos' proximity to a huge slaving region, use of high-speed slave vessels, and the effective local trade organization further reduced the cost and time expended in the slaving business.[12] The quickness of slave loading at Lagos is shown in the records of two ships, *Henriquetta* (TSD #2983) and *Relampago* (TSD #4786), the latter of which precipitated the British occupation of Lagos in 1851. Ships did not dock at the port until there were enough slaves to load. The practice was for local traders to assemble slaves in designated hideouts near the Lagos lagoon, while the slave ship stayed far offshore. As soon as enough slaves were assembled, a signal was sent to the ship to dock, load slaves and depart as fast as possible.[13] On 12 April 1827, the brig,

Henriquetta left Bahia for Lagos and completed her voyage in forty-nine days, bringing back 544 slaves. She left Bahia again on 12 August, and docked at Lagos on 2 September. After discharging her cargo, the vessel loaded 569 slaves and departed four days later. The *Relampago,* on the other hand, left Lagos in September 1851 with about 820 slaves, a day after she docked.[14]

REPATRIATION OF EX-SLAVES AND THE AGUDA COMMUNITY IN LAGOS

In Bahia, Brazil, we have data on slaves imported from the Bight of Benin. Of the 71,565 slaves, mostly Yoruba, exported from Lagos and Badagry between 1801 and 1867, 23,241 or 32.48 per cent disembarked in Bahia. João Reis notes that about one-third of all Bahian slaves in the mid-1830s came from Yorubaland. His conclusion derives from archival sources which identify 898 (30.2 per cent) Yoruba from a census of 2,969 slaves, whose ethnic origins are known, including samples of 1,480 slaves manumitted between 1819 and 1836, 1,212 urban slaves from 1820 to 1835 and 277 Blacks charged for taking part in the 1835 slave revolt.[15]

Arising from their demographic superiority, there was an increased participation by Yoruba–speaking slaves (Nago) soon after they began to arrive in huge numbers after 1817. Of the nine major revolts reported between 1807 and 1835, Hausa slaves led every revolt until 1816, and the Nago were at the vanguard of the revolts from 1822-1835.[16] The two phases of the revolts parallel events in the Nigerian hinterland; the first following the decade after the 1804 outbreak of the Sokoto jihad in Hausaland; and the second coinciding with the Hausa slave revolt in Oyo, in 1817, and the fall of Oyo around 1835.[17]

Unlike the previous half century, when human traffic mostly left Lagos for Brazil, the outbreak in 1835 of a slave rebellion in Bahia reversed the direction of movement toward Africa.[18] The rebellion was led by Yoruba Muslims (hence the labels of 'Malê' [Muslim] and 'Nago' uprising), freed slaves whose mission has been interpreted variously as demands for freedom, return to Africa, or simply a 'province of freedom'. Many freed ex-slaves were deported to Africa in the aftermath of the revolt. In particular, a law was passed ordering the deportation of a number of Africans regardless of their connection with the revolt. After a botched attempt to resettle suspected Africans in the Portuguese colony of Angola, the first batch, made up of 150 suspects, were hurriedly deported to West Africa in February 1835, at government expense. This was followed by another group of 148 sent to West Africa on the Brazilian Schooner *Maria Damiana* on 12 November 1835, and another group deported three days later on the *Annibal e Oriente.* Within

a year of the revolt, Verger notes that more than 700 Africans applied for passports and voluntarily left Brazil as a means of avoiding the suspicion and mistrust of Africans in Brazil.[19] Another writer, Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, notes that during the second half of the nineteenth century, 3,300 Africans and 1,278 Creoles left Bahia for Africa, while the number of repatriates, during the entire century amounted to about 8,000.[20]

Because most Yoruba (Nago) had entered Bahia not long before 1835, many repatriates were first-generation slaves. The nostalgia for Africa was greater in these people than in the Creole generation born in Brazil. Consequently, among the repatriates were people, sometimes old, who viewed return to Africa as 'retirement from work' and fulfilment of a Yoruba worldview: returning home from a farm or market.[21] Although the longing for 'original homeland' was natural, there were other enabling factors such as the continuing traffic between Yorubaland and Brazil. The constant human traffic between Yorubaland and Brazil, whether of slaves arriving in Brazil or emigrants landing in West Africa, made the Atlantic a highway linking these societies. Every group of new slaves arriving in Bahia, and emigrants to Africa, became news bearers.

In many respects repatriation, forced or voluntary, was a setback for the nascent Brazilian-Nago group. Yet it produced good results by boosting communication between Africa and Brazil. Of course, not every returnee was Nago, nor did every Nago leave Brazil. In deciding whether to leave Brazil and where to settle in Africa, the repatriates considered a couple of issues. What did home mean? Where was it? And what would they do should they get there?

For many immigrants, home meant the towns where they were enslaved several decades before. Unfortunately, many such homes had been destroyed and abandoned in the course of the Yoruba wars. For instance, a greater part of Oyo, Egba, Yagba, Igbomina and Owu towns, from where slaves were taken, no longer existed. Owu and Egba towns had been destroyed and surviving populations relocated to Abeokuta (the Egba), while the Owu scattered all over Yorubaland. Many Ekiti, Oyo and Yagba town populations had also relocated to rocky and forested areas for better defence against enemies. Hence, many emigrants no longer had an easily identifiable Yoruba home. For others whose towns remained intact, many came from the Yoruba interior, and in other cases Hausa and Nupe, and could not return home because of political conflicts in the Nigerian hinterland. For these reasons, many emigrants settled in West African coastal towns. As will be seen below, Owu, the homeland of Seteolu Pereira and Seteolu Gomez, was completely destroyed and evacuated in 1822. This was why many Aguda settled all over

West Africa, especially in port towns from Monrovia in Liberia to towns in the Niger Delta. Studies by Elisée Soummoni, Robin Law and Silke Strickrodt have identified Aguda communities of Yoruba origin in places like Agoue, Accra, Ouidah and Porto Novo.[22] For example, Gomez's decision to live briefly in Liberia was based on his knowledge of the evacuation of Owu. As soon as he was established with his relatives, now settled at Abeokuta, and Lagos safely in British hands, he came to Lagos. Others who settled in Lagos, as we shall see below, never returned to their original towns.

Perhaps the opportunities available in coastal towns were more important. These towns serve as the trade hubs of West Africa, offering employment in trade with the Americas, Europe and the African interior and cultural diversity. Returnees with skills in language, trade and foreign contacts, had an advantage over local people in becoming trade brokers and artisans. Also, after the 1850s, European rule meant that schools were established in coastal towns to produce workers for the burgeoning British colony. Such schools became attractive to Yoruba (at home and in Brazil). Some sent their children from Bahia to be educated in Africa. As studies have demonstrated, many families left some members in Brazil so that many families had branches around the Atlantic rim. Thus, during the nineteenth century, family members criss-crossed the Atlantic – parents retiring to Yorubaland and their children moving to Africa or America for education and work.[23]

The choice of Ouidah and Porto Novo also had emotional reasons. Both cities, long settled by Brazilian traders and Afro-Brazilians, enabled the returnees to start their new lives in Africa under established patrons like da Souza and Martinez. These patrons provided lodging and contacts. News about the benevolence of local Brazilians enabled plans put forth by would-be emigrants to Africa.

Nonetheless, things did not always turn out well for the settlers. Stories abound of those who disembarked in port towns only to be robbed, re-enslaved, and sometimes murdered by local authorities. There were reports of emigrants abandoned by ship captains before reaching their final destination, or captured by local authorities upon arrival. In 1854, for instance, Consul Campbell noted that emigrants were settled in Ouidah against their will, after which their goods were looted and some re-enslaved by Dahomian authorities. He cited the fate of 240 emigrants forced to disembark at Ouidah, whose belongings were seized even though the value was more than their debt to the ship's captain.[24] Two years later, he recorded another sad case where a group of 40 returnees, forcibly landed at Ouidah, were sent to the king of Dahomey, who had the adults among them killed

during the annual festival and their goods confiscated.[25] In Lagos, Oba Akintoye and his successors imposed an immigration tax of 10 bags of cowries on each returnee family. Failure to pay could lead to the seizure of their property. On Consul Campbell's persuasion, Akintoye's son and successor, Dosunmu, reduced the fee to 20,000 cowries in 1853 and later abolished it. But in 1857, Dosunmu desired to re-introduce the levy when about 120 Bahian returnees arrived with a lot of money. In effect, he treated the levy as a sort of trade tax. As late as the 1870s, this tax continued to be levied on travels by returnees or traders. When Rev Charles Phillips, with a 23-people party and heavy luggage, arrived in Eastern Yorubaland in March 1877, he paid a bundle of grey baft cloth as passage fee at Araromi. At Igbobini, however, Aduwo demanded a bag of cowries from each of the visitors.[26] Initially, Phillips refused to pay this amount, claiming the protection of the British flag. Aduwo refused to accept any immunity for 'Black British citizens'. Moreover, since his economy depended largely on levies paid by travellers, and the large number of traders from Lagos, a substantial part of his income would disappear should 'British citizens' be exempt from passage fees.[27] The feeling was that the returnees had money and could afford to pay huge taxes.

In Lagos, there are no detailed statistics on Brazilian emigrants. In 1853, Consul Benjamin Campbell put the number of returnees at about 130 Brazilian families. Within a decade the number rose to about 1,000 settlers and 5,000 in 1889 – representing one in every seven Lagos residents.[28] The rapid growth of the Aguda population after 1850 was associated with the British capture of Lagos in 1851, and annexation a decade later.

Afro-Brazilian returnees to Lagos took to trade; usually on a smaller scale than the Saro (returnees from Sierra Leone), whose competence in the English language, immigration from a British colony, and ties with the Church Missionary Society (unlike the mostly catholic and Muslim Aguda) gave them some advantages in an emerging British colonial economy and culture. To compensate for their disadvantages, the Aguda dominated the artisan sector. Until the 1940s, they were the best masons in Nigeria and their signature works such as the CMS and Catholic Cathedrals, as well as the Shitta Bey Mosque, all in Lagos, constituted major architectural landmarks in Nigeria.[29]

The most important means of contact between Nigerian Afro-Brazilians and Brazil was trade.[30] They traded in Yoruba textiles, kola nuts, palm oil, cowries, soaps, calabashes, baskets, mats and natron, among other items, in exchange for Brazilian tobacco, rum, molasses, sugar, dried meat, salted fish, gold bars, gold dust and textiles. Lagos trade records show the importation

of Cola acuminata and cola nitida as early as 1861. In 1862, 10 small ships, seven of which sailed under the Brazilian flag, brought goods weighing a total of 1901 long tons to the port of Lagos.[31] The number of shipments from Brazil fell afterwards from nine vessels carrying goods to the tune of 1413 long tons and 73 crewmen in 1865 to five vessels in 1885.[32] Each of these vessels usually returned to Brazil filled with African products.

Table 1: Kolanut Export from Lagos to Brazil, 1862-1899

Year	Qty (packs)	Value £
1862-79	191 (average)	
1863	254	
1866	21	c.1000
1869	397	
1878	539	1 450
1880-89	243 (average)	3 000
1890	2 091	696
1891	2 750	761
1892	28 993	678
1893	41 640	1 411
1894	NA	NA
1895	60	7
1896	21 051	167
1897	3 546	144
1898	1 032	60
1899	9 368	246

Source: *Blue Books for the Colony of Lagos*, 1862-1899.

Returnee Afro-Brazilians, even when they traded in their own right, brokered trade for big Brazilian and Portuguese firms, five of whom had offices in Lagos in 1865.[33] For example, in the 1850s Afro-Brazilians retailed Bahian rum and tobacco imported by the European firm of Oswald and Co. Years later, in an obituary, Joaquim Manoel dos Reis, aged 96, was described as a popular and talented guitar player and one of the oldest immigrants, who worked for Sant Anna, Porto Novo, for seven years and later as a book-keeper for Messrs Fernandez of Tinubu Square.[34] These agents differed from big merchants like Domingo Martinez. Martinez was not the only big Brazilian merchant in Lagos. Unlike Governor Moloney, who in 1888 classified the firm of M. J. Sant Anna as a 'Portuguese European House,' the Court Chief

Registrar in 1894, J.A. Ottombah Payne, calls it a 'Brazilian Commercial House' along with that of PJ Gomez.[35] MJ Sant Anna had two registered warehouses in Kakawa Street in 1888.[36] In the 1890s, when the Bahia-Lagos traffic was no more than a trickle, trading vessels continued to carry goods and people from Brail to Lagos three to four times a year.[37]

As trade agents, students and travellers, Afro-Brazilians used their regular contact with Brazil to also engage in trade. Joaquim Francisco Devode Branco, born in Dahomey in 1856, sailed to Salvador in 1864, where he lived until 1894. He returned to Lagos and became a prosperous trader, travelling frequently between West Africa and Brazil for trade until he died in 1924, leaving landed properties in Lagos, Porto Novo and Cotonou. There was also Juan des Castro, a tailor who made a fortune shipping tobacco and jerked beef back to Lagos when he visited Brazil in 1881.[38]

TRADERS AND EXTRA-COMMERCIAL NETWORKS

Political, ethnic, linguistic, and social networks shaped the organization of commerce and formed the basis of Yoruba–Brazil relations. As noted above, Oba Akinsemoyin sent a four-person delegation, led by João de Oliveira, to discuss trade with Brazilian officials in 1770. Though details of the mission are scanty, this strategy was subsequently employed by Akinsemoyin's successors to the kingship of Lagos. In 1807 Oba Esinlokun sent other envoys to the Portuguese emperor in Brazil to negotiate better trade relations between the two monarchs. The envoys took with them a slave as gift for the emperor.[39] While some envoys might have spoken through Portuguese interpreters in Bahia, others, like Oliviera, was competent in the language. By the 1820s, many Yoruba spoke a range of European languages in pidgin and standardized forms. The story of Tapa Ladunji, a slave of Oba Esinlokun, is of interest. A Nupe (Tapa) and Muslim by birth, Ladunji was enslaved and sold to Lagos around the 1820s. He spoke the Nupe language, and probably Hausa. As a royal confidant, Oba Esinlokun of Lagos sent a trade delegation composed of Ladunji and Dada Antonio to Bahia. Perhaps, based upon the contacts established during their trip, on their return, Ladunji was appointed a royal chamberlain and trade representative (Osodi). In the 1840s both men became military commanders leading brigades and espousing the interests of Esinlokun's son, Oba Kosoko. In effect, Ladunji's links with the Central Sudan and Brazil were useful in making him a leading Lagos trader and politician in the 1830s to 1860s.[40]

After 1835, with the repatriation of ex-slaves from Brazil, more people with competence in Portuguese, and knowledge of the Brazilian economy and society, emerged to broker trade for Lusophone firms. For example, in

1850 three of Kosoko's sons (Simplicio, Lourenço, and Camilio) returned to Lagos after studying in Bahia, where they learnt Portuguese and other Western skills.[41] In December 1854, David Hinderer and Edward Irving of the CMS met one such bilingual trade broker, who was Kosoko's brother and agent while Kosoko lived in exile in Ijebu. According to Irving:

> a great stir ... [at Ogere] announced the arrival of some important person, and we were ... joined by a ... well dressed, clean, very sensual looking man, whom the ... people told us was Kosoko's brother. We immediately shook hands, exchanged salutations, and, after a few words, he asked us if we could speak Portuguese, as in that case he could tell us a good word. [Because we could not] after a few more words and after shaking hands, [he] retired and [the crowd] with him.[42]

Here, 'good word' refers to trade talks – probably in slaves, which would have benefited Portuguese/Brazilian traders, given the circumstances.

The careers of two Brazilian slavers – Francisco Félix da Souza and Domingo Martinez – highlight Brazils' domination of the Bight of Benin slave trade. As their stories show, da Souza first came to West Africa in 1792, staying until 1795 when he left for Brazil, only to return to Africa finally in 1800. Not later than 1815, Félix da Souza had become one of the leading merchants in West Africa. His marriage to local women, by other accounts, might have helped him gain access to local trade networks. He also befriended the kings of Dahomey, to the extent that he was made Chachá (or sort of international trade envoy) to the Dahomian state. He was powerful enough to organize a coup d'état which removed Adandozan from the throne, and installed Gezo in 1818. Félix da Souza was very rich and had a couple of vessels in which he shipped slaves to Brazil.[43] In 1825, Ajindo, where he had a slave depot, was described as 'a town of considerable trade for slaves... and the only place where vessels anchor between Badagry and Lagos.'[44]

Domingo Martinez settled in West Africa several years after da Souza, and it is said that he may have worked under Souza. As the slave trade dwindled at Ouidah, and as da Souza aged and his influence decreased, Martinez settled in Lagos.[45] During the reign of Oba Akintoye in Lagos (1841-45), he became a major player in the Lagos-Bahia trade and established trade stations at Ouidah, Porto Novo, Ibese, and Ajindo in addition to a Lagos office. Even though he relocated to Porto Novo when his patron and friend, Akintoye, lost the throne in 1845, Martinez remained powerful and successfully wooed the new king, Kosoko (1845-51) to his side. In the

thick of British anti-slavery patrols, Martinez moved his operations to Ibese, a less accessible village nine miles west of Lagos, which he termed a 'free port.' He advertised his operations at Ibese:

> Within these four months I have dispatched ... four ships with captives and six days ago I sent another vessel...to Rio de Janeiro. I am now loading three ships in this port and I shall wait till your young man comes to the free port (?) of Onim that we may agree upon all directly; and I have only to tell you that if you keep independent of the whites [British navy], the people of Onim shall never be without one of my ships.[46]

Under Akintoye's reign Martinez reportedly made a fortune of one to two million dollars from selling slaves in Lagos.[47] A good portion of those profits was reinvested. Given the context of European anti-slavery, it is significant that operations at these factories put these two Brazilians at the terminus of the sale of victims of the Yoruba and Hausa wars. As the slave trade declined, Martinez shifted to the new trade in legitimate products, buying cotton and palm oil from Yorubaland and importing tobacco and rum from Brazil. In the mid-1850s the British consul in Lagos credited him with controlling 'at least 80 per cent of the tobacco and rum shipped from Bahia.'[48]

Other alliances existed between Brazilian and Yoruba merchants, which suggest long-standing social and political networks. For instance, Lagos traders kept residences in Brazil just as Bahian merchants lived in Yorubaland, resulting in traders having stakes on both sides of the Atlantic.[49] Extra commercial exchanges among merchants ranged from social visits, gifts, and help in collecting debts or renting stores; military advising; marriage alliances; and feasts. The degree of familiarity among the groups is reflected in a letter from Senhor Colonia, Bahian trader and friend of Oba Kosoko of Lagos: 'I and my wife and children are well ... Do me the favour to present my mother's compliments to all your wives and children; [and] all your headmen....'[50] Thus, the families of Colonia and Kosoko knew each other, and since Kosoko's wives certainly did not visit Brazil, Colonia's family presumably lived in Lagos if they had met the Kosokos. In Bahia, another merchant, Francisco Godinho, was the guardian to Kosoko's three sons, and he met at least once with Colonia to discuss Kosoko's plan to withdraw the boys from school.[51] Kosoko served in the same capacity for Bahian children in Lagos. He informed a father in Bahia 'Your son is always asking me to write to you, and I wish very much you would come here, that I may see you, and that you may see him. Your son desires his best remembrances to

you.'[52] These family ties point to the trust that underpinned trade. It is not fortuitous that these family ties appeared in the mid-nineteenth century.

Social networking was fundamental to the success of many traders. By selling goods on credit, Domingo Martinez fostered ties with local chiefs. When warfare closed the Abeokuta-Badagry road in 1845, he begged Egba chiefs to open the route. For agreeing to end the war and reopen trade, he advanced large quantities of trade items and gifts to some Badagry chiefs, and gifts valued at about £200 to Abeokuta chiefs in 1846.[53] Almost simultaneously, he intervened in the Lagos monarchical wars, supporting at various times the two contenders, Akintoye and Kosoko. For instance, just as his opponents, especially the Christians, were describing him as a slave dealer and friend of Kosoko, he was providing succour to Akintoye, the pro-Christian candidate, by allowing him to live temporarily at Ajindo. Reading this posture as fraudulent and a plot to encourage slavery, Rev. Martin condemned Martinez's plan as evil, 'an insatiable desire for filthy lucre,' and a conspiracy to expel the British and consolidate Portuguese slaving influence.[54] The point here is that in an era when politics frequently interfered with commerce, merchants supported combatants to gain favour, or reconciled with them to ensure uninterrupted trade.

AFRO-BRAZILIAN COMMUNITY AND PAN-AFRICAN NETWORK

The discussion above has revealed at least two aspects of Yoruba-Brazil relations. Obviously, most of the people leaving Yorubaland for Brazil were slaves and ties between the two regions remained primarily economic. There were non-commercial links as well. Yoruba students crossed the Atlantic in search of education and skills. Such students, upon their return, became language experts which suited them well for employment as trade clerks, political agents and artisans. On the other hand, Brazilians who lived or trained in Lagos, to use Lorrand Matory's expression, became the 'English professors of Brazil' transmitting African culture and treated as transnational cultural propagators.[55]

The idea of regional political and economic cooperation and integration in West Africa can be traced to the nineteenth century. While the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the slave trade, the brutalization and humiliation of Africans, and the crystallization of social Darwinism, which sees Africans as racially inferior to Whites, the latter century also recorded attempts by so-called humanitarians to institute social reform. More importantly, the slaves themselves were involved in the various revolts in Bahia, and voluntary emigration aimed at ending the slave trade and restoring African dignity. The latter, couched as the idea of African nationality and

inherent uniqueness of Black culture, seems to be the major preoccupation of some early pan-African writers such as Martin Delaney, Robert Campbell and Edward W. Blyden.[56] The repatriation of Africans from Brazil and other American and European states in the various 'Back to Africa Movements' must be seen as efforts at restoring to Africa its dignity lost to slavery.

Although the Aguda were not as prolific as their counterparts from English colonies, they also shared trans-national aspirations. Before many left Africa, Yoruba-speaking slaves viewed each other as belonging to separate ethnicities. The differences were largely buried in the Americas where, in contrast to Yoruba in the homeland, who identified themselves as Oyo, Anago, Egba, Ijesa, Ijebu, Akoko, Ekiti, Owo, Ketu, Owu, Ife, Egbado, Igbomina, Yagba, Owe, Oworo, and Bunu, these ethnicities were forged into a Nago identity in Brazil. Even though many Yoruba slaves in Brazil were victims of the Sokoto jihad in the homeland, opposition to slavery in Bahia, as seen above, was couched in religious terms with Yoruba and Hausa uniting as Muslims against their owners. Trans-ethnic alliances formed in Brazil were brought back to Africa and reinforced the birth of modern Yoruba ethnic consciousness and regional cooperation.[57]

As noted earlier, the returnees settled in scattered cities and nations, and kept families and friends in Brazil. From their various communities they travelled, married and visited families and friends across national and international frontiers. In Benin republic, for instance, occupants of the Maro quarter of Ouidah and the central section of Porto Novo in Benin republic descended from Afro-Brazilian returnees mostly of Yoruba origin.[58] Robin Law notes that nearly 20 per cent of Ouidah residents, in the early twentieth century, trace their origin to Yorubaland. Also, seven years ago, this author met some Nigerians in Porto Novo partaking in the annual Aguda celebration. These people traced their ancestries to the da Souza family of Ouidah.[59] It would be useful to examine the story of three Lagos Aguda families.

THE PEREIRA FAMILY[60]

The Pereira family of Campbell/Odunlami Street in Lagos Island descended from Seteolu Pereira. Seteolu was born in Owu district and taken into slavery during the Yoruba wars of the 1820s. Like most slaves he adopted the name of his Brazilian master, Francisco Pereira. Having redeemed himself, he got married in 1869. The couple and their three children and associates, who looked up to Pereira as patron, returned to West Africa in 1889. In those days, many returnees did not complete the journey to their original homelands because of the insecurity encountered in different parts of Africa. Others

could no longer locate their families, who had been evacuated from their towns. Finally, others chose to settle in coastal towns that offered more commercial opportunities. For example, some of the people travelling with Pereira stopped variously in Togo, Ouidah, Porto Novo and Badagry with the hope of collecting more information about their old towns. Others did so because these towns had vibrant Aguda communities. The fact that those who survived the wars on Owu moved to Abeokuta, might have encouraged Pereira to settle in Lagos, about 100 miles south of Abeokuta. For these reasons members of the Pereira family of Lagos shared ancestral ties with the Pereiras found in other West African towns. So far, we know that Francisco, one of Seteolu Pereira's children, relocated from Lagos to Agoue, Togo. In 1931, an Agoue man by the name of Francisco da Silva Pereira had a number of 'unfree' workers on his farms.[61] Whether he was the same person or not is unclear.

Apart from the connection with Togo, the Pereiras also maintained contact with Brazil through visits to Bahia and Togo, variously, by Seteolu himself and later by a grandson, Anthony. The contact was discontinued after Anthony's death. His death was conveyed to Brazil through a letter to which there was no reply. Pereira's other children were Quinero and Maria, whose children could not be identified. Quinero had six children, one of whom was Anthony, whose first son, Andrei of the Nigerian Air Force, is now the head of the family. Through Anthony, the Pereira family has traced its origin to Abeokuta, and identified Pereira's African name as Seteolu.

THE GOMEZ FAMILY[62]

This family descended from Seteolu Gomez, also of Owu, who in all probability had also been enslaved in the 1820s. After the 1835 Bahia slave revolt Gomez was determined to return to Africa, but his original home, Owu, had been destroyed.Abeokuta, where the majority of Owu refugees settled, was not peaceful. Therefore Gomez left Bahia for Liberia, an American colony, and sailed slowly toward Lagos, stopping for short periods at Agoue and Porto Novo to gather information about his relatives. On his journey, many people followed him. Most of these people also had the name Gomez, so that one would think they had the same Brazilian owner. Like the Pereiras, members of the Gomez entourage also settled in locations scattered between Liberia and Nigeria. Gomez' last stopping place before reaching Lagos was Cotonou, where he built a large compound and had children.

Seteolu arrived in Lagos in the 1850s and built a house on the plot where the State House at Marina now stands. The plot of land, which he

purchased, extended to the land currently occupied by the King's College and the Roman Catholic secretariat near Lagos Island club. However, as the British government extended its control over Lagos, portions of the Gomez estate on Ajele Street were appropriated by the British Colonial administration, thereby forcing a dispersal of many of his followers to other parts of Lagos.

On arrival, Seteolu, a Catholic in Bahia, reverted to the Yoruba religion. He invited one Ajanaku, an Ifa priest and native doctor[63] who, after consulting Ifa, advised him to worship Yemoja. Seteolu had many wives and children, mostly girls. One of his daughters was married to Oba Dosunmu of Lagos (1852-1885) and even though she was childless, she was a favourite wife. Dosunmu gave her plots of land in what is now Faji Street. The land was inherited by the Gomez family. Even though Seteolu reverted to Yoruba religion, there seemed to have been no compulsion on his children and followers to do so, hence the presence of Catholics, Muslims and Orisa worshippers in the family.

Unlike Seteolu Pereira, Gomez never returned to nor maintained any relationship with Brazil. Instead, he established links with his people at Totoro Owu, Abeokuta. In Lagos he met Seteolu Pereira, whom he had known in Bahia and whose family he had known at Owu. The two Seteolus became life-long friends and were differentiated by their areas of origin in Owu. Pereira became Seteolu Oba, and Gomez, Seteolu Totoro. Gomez's family maintains a strong relationship with their relatives at Totoro Owu; retired Justice Gomez currently holds an Owu chieftaincy. As can be expected, over six generations, the Gomez family has become extremely big and scattered and family ties are weak. The most important remaining bond is the retention of the name Gomez.

THE JOÃO DA ROCHA FAMILY

This family, one of the most prominent Afro-Brazilian families in Nigeria, descended from Esan da Rocha. The early history of this family is unclear. Family tradition suggests that Esan' father was one of the early Christian enquirers in Ijesaland, and by the 1840s Esan had been sent to the Christian Sunday school. On his way to school, Esan was kidnapped and sold to Lagos. From Lagos he was sold to a Portuguese slave vessel, which brought him to Bahia. This story could not be verified. Christian sources show that the first Christian teacher did not settle in Ijesa before the 1850s, with the stationing of the Anglican teacher, George D. Vincent. So, the only way Esan could have attended Sunday school in the 1840s was if some returnee slaves from Sierra Leone settled at Ijesa in the 1840s and set up mini-chapels.

In Bahia, Esan became a slave to a Salvador merchant dealing in assorted materials and renamed João da Rocha. Esan brought to Brazil some of the commercial acumen he had acquired under his father, and within a few years he made enough money to redeem himself. In 1864, he redeemed and married an Ijesa woman, Angelica Nougeira Martina. They had their first child, Candido, in 1866.

In January 1870, da Rocha and his family left Brazil and reached Lagos four months later.[64] In Lagos, Esan and Angelica had three more children: Moyses, Joanna and Josephina. Angelica died shortly after giving birth to her last child at the age of 44, while Esan lived up to the age of 88.

In Lagos, Esan settled on Kakawa Street in the Brazilian quarter where he established a general produce trading store, and another one on Tinubu Square dealing in items of local and international commerce. By the 1890s Esan had been joined by his son, Candido, and they established another shop on Tinubu Square, designated as their International Office to handle trade with Brazil. Items traded with Brazil included woven and dyed clothes, black soap, cowry beads, kola nut, alligator pepper and bitter kola. From Brazil he imported textiles, shoes, gold bars, gold dust and salted fish. Esan died in the early decades of this century, leaving an estate valued at 1500 British pounds,[65] and was buried with his wife at the Ikoyi cemetery.

Candido da Rocha took over his father's business, becoming one of the very few entrepreneurs of his days. He became such a dependable financier that by the 1920s his name was synonymous with wealth in Yoruba folklore: 'O l'owo bi da Rocha' (He is as rich as Da Rocha) became a catch phrase for estimating individual wealth. He died in 1959. His brother, Moyses, became one of the first generation Nigerian medical doctors trained in Scotland. Joanna was a good pianist and singer. Josephina, the last of the children, was a devoted Christian and participated in numerous religious activities aimed at improving the lot of the less privileged. One of Candido's daughters, Mrs Angelica Folasade Thomas, born in 1904, was the head of the family when I interviewed her in 1989. No fewer than six generations of descendants have lived in Nigeria at the family house on 12, Kakawa Street, Lagos.

The da Rocha family still maintain a connection with relations in Brazil. One of their relatives is a Brazilian politician and medical director of the Ammonia factory at Camasari, Dr José da Rocha. José's sister, Senhora Beatriz da Rocha is a nursing sister in Brazil. José has visited the da Rochas of Lagos three times, and Beatriz da Rocha was in Lagos in December 1987. There are other unnamed relations with whom the Lagos Da Rochas exchange regular communication. In addition, the da Rochas also maintain family relationships with Ilesa because Esan reunited with Ilesa, as soon as

he returned from Brazil. His relatives are at Idifi ward, Ilesa. To establish a stronger political, economic and diplomatic relatinship, the Owa of Ilesa, Owa Haastrup gave Candido a traditional title in 1942.[66] Candido's daughter, Angelica Folasade Thomas, is the lady president of Ilesa Descendants Union in Lagos.[67]

Arising from the conditions of Lagos in the nineteenth century, many Brazilians and their descendants formed a tight-knit community of individuals united by ancestral bonds, residence, language, religion, and common experiences with slavery and opposition from the Saros, Europeans, and local Yoruba. In the early decades of the twentieth century, they still demonstrated group consciousness through intra-community marriage, retention of Portuguese names,[68] and viewed themselves as a section of the new Lagos elite. Initially, Brazilian descendants seldom married outside the Brazilian community. The few who married outside the community in the early years of this century, married into Saro families or to members of the local Nigerian aristocracy.[69] Two such marriages were the marriage between Seteolu Gomez's daughter and King Dosunmu of Lagos in the 1850s; and between a Brazilian lady and the Oba Ademola, the Alake of Abeokuta around 1900. A product of the latter marriage was Justice Adetokunbo Ademola, the first indigenous Chief Justice of Nigeria.

Brazilian consciousness is also evident in the retention of Portuguese names like Cardoso, Campos, Marquis, Ganzallo, Pedro, Martins, Marinho, Pinheiro, Fernandez, Sho-Silva, DaSilva, Da-Souza, Gomez and Da Rocha. These names stood as instant identification with a 'superior civilization' or heritage, a source of pride and a symbol distinguishing them from other Nigerians. Following the manner by which the names had been adopted, and the end to which they could be deployed in early colonial Lagos, many associates and clients of Afro-Brazilians adopted such names. So it is difficult to distinguish between direct descendants of Brazilian returnees and those of their clients. This was a point of discussion among the Gomez's in the 1980s.[70] Furthermore, it is important to note that some of the Afro-Brazilians continued with the worship of their African gods after returning to Lagos. These *Orisa* were with them wherever they found themselves. As the case of the *Egungun* and Ifa branches of the Bamgbose Martins and Gomez families shows, *Orisa* adherents existed among the descendants until recently. Gomez, by calling Ajanaku to divine in the Ifa oracle for him, implies he still valued the practice of divination by his forebears.[71]

It is apparent that the Brazilian returnees and their descendants were nostalgic about Brazil and sought to stay in contact, initially, through individual, family and commercial connections, and later through official

diplomatic links. Up till 1930, there existed powerful reunification movements across the Atlantic, both for people returning to Africa, visiting families and friends in Bahia, and in some cases relocating to Bahia. There were those returnees who could not readapt to life in Africa. After a short stay, they returned to Brazil, leaving some family members in Nigeria. An example is that of the Brazilian Creole and son of enslaved Africans, Paulo Freitas. After his mother's death in 1890, he moved with his father and sister Francisca Freitas to Lagos, where his father died soon after arrival. Paulo remained in Lagos, working as a carpenter until 1910 when he returned with his wife and children to Brazil, where he died in 1938. Francisca Freitas remained in Lagos and this made it possible for the Freitas family in Lagos to link with those in Brazil. Another example in this category is the family of Paulo José Ferreira, another Bahian Creole born in 1886 to Yoruba parents who returned to Nigeria with their family in 1889. Paulo grew up in Nigeria, living in Lagos and Kano, before he returned to Brazil in the 1920s, leaving his sisters and five children in Lagos and Kano. It is through correspondence between Paulo and the people left behind that a link between Nigeria and Brazil grew.[72]

Another category of these familial connections was constituted by Afro-Brazilians who did not personally return to Africa either due to old age, poverty, or procrastination, and not being sure of what Africa may have in stock for them; or to consciously building a diasporic family. These people sent their children to be educated in Lagos, or to live there. A case in point was that of Senhor Martiniano de Bonfim, born on 16 October 1859. His Egba slave father arrived in Bahia around 1842. After several attempts to escape slavery, either through suicide or buying his freedom, Martiano's father became free around 1851 and redeemed his wife in 1855. Martiniano was sent to Lagos by his father in 1875 to be educated, while the father returned to Brazil in 1876. Martiniano lived in Nigeria until 1886, taught by the Reverend M.T. John, Michael Tom Jones and Hezekiah Lewis at the Presbyterian school in Faji alongside two of King Dosunmu's sons, Falade and Ogunye. He worked as a trained mason on the construction of the Holy Cross Cathedral. He returned to Brazil and later became a prominent leader in Yoruba cults, and was recognized by Afro-Brazilians in Brazil as an authority in all matters relating to the Yoruba people until his death. Throughout his lifetime he maintained contact with Nigeria.[73]

The last and largest category of these relationships is that of families which came to Nigeria and never went back to Brazil, but kept connections with Brazil. It is to this category that a number of Afro-Brazilian Nigerian families belong. Madam Romana Conceição is representative of this category.

Her mother brought her to Lagos from Brazil in 1901 at the age of twelve. She grew up in Nigeria, but maintained connections with her mother's friends in Recife, Pernambuco; a relationship that is still maintained by her son, Mr Olumuyiwa Martins, who was born in 1915.[74]

Sometimes, the Lagos Aguda is presented as a monolithic community, but evidence on the ground suggests otherwise. There is no doubt that the first generation of Brazilians brought their Brazilian experiences and links into interactions among themselves, and relations with Brazil and other segments of the Nigerian population. But as the population increased and new events unfolded, such as the return into the interior of some of this population, and involvement in local political, social and economic disputes, group interest among the Brazilians began to diminish. By the 1850s Brazilians had begun to trickle into the interior, settling north of Lagos or heading back to their original homes.[75] Lazaro Borges da Silva moved to Ilorin, and the Pinheiros moved to Imesi Ile, while the Alakijas and Ribeiros settled in Abeokuta. Some others relocated to the northern frontiers of Lagos colony; for instance Vincente and George, who established the villages of Muroko and Georgetown in modern Somolu area of Lagos.[76] In 1854 and 1859 respectively, Consuls Benjamin Campbell and William Baikie complained of plots by some Lagos chiefs, including Oba Dosunmu, Madam Tinubu and sections of Saro and Aguda, to murder them. In foiling the first plot, Campbell was supported by a successful Afro-Brazilian trader, Anthonio Martins, and his armed men.[77]

Afro-Brazilians were also partisans in late nineteenth century Yoruba power politics. This we find in the history of Phillipe Meffre José, who was enslaved when his town of Ilesa fell to Ibadan forces in the early 1850s. When he returned from Brazil around 1866, persistent insecurity in the Ijesa country forced him to settle in Lagos, where he practised as a diviner. He later joined the CMS. He seized upon expanding commercial opportunities to redeem Takuro, an Ijesa, from slavery and set him up as a trader and head of the Ijesa colony of Ayesan. By the 1880s, Ayesan had become a commercial port on the eastern Yoruba trade route, where weapons were channelled to the anti-Ibadan Ekiti-Ijesa alliance.[78]

If tension in the Aguda community mirrored local political trends, it involved generational changes as well. Turner, Lindsay and Matory's studies provide a timeline that shows a lull in Yoruba-Brazil human traffic in the 1920s. The lull, one could reason, stems from the decline of African-born slaves in Brazil to the extent that interactions between Nigeria and Brazil were largely passed on to the Creole generation with limited attachment to Africa. Another problem was the feeling that to be an Aguda was to have

a slave ancestry, and possibly no firm root in Lagos. The slave/freeborn divide also separated Afro-Brazilian returnees from their Nigerian-born children. Although the latter retained their Portuguese surnames, they did not want to be associated with the servile past of their ancestors. The forum that emerged to maintain the group consciousness, which had been part of the emigrants' life, was the creation of the Aguda Friendly Society and the Brazilian Descendants Association (BDA) in 1919.[79] These associations organized various ceremonies and carnivals such as the Nossa Senhora de Bonfim, which comes up on the last Saturday of May every year.[80] They also attended to the welfare of the community. As late as 1970, '90 years after the prohibition of schooling in Portuguese in Lagos,' an Aguda, Mr Fragoso of Ibadan, started a private journal, *A Lãmpada Português*, to promote the Portuguese language among Afro-Brazilians.[81]

Apart from bringing the Brazilian descendants together, the BDA had by the 1970s become a sort of pressure group promoting cultural and economic relations with Brazil. The union maintains good relationships with the Brazilian embassy in Nigeria to forge continuous links between Nigeria and Brazil. The Embassy invites the union to its social activities and during the visit of important officials from Brazil. The Embassy commiserates with Lagos-Brazilians when they are bereaved, and until recently mounted Portuguese lessons for interested Nigerians, of whom the Aguda had always formed the majority.[82] In February 2000, the Brazilian ambassador organized an *Efeijuda* day for the Aguda, and in attendance were senior Nigerian officials, including the deputy governor of Lagos State, Kofo-Bucknor Akerele, Secretary to the Lagos State government Babajide DaSilva, Major General Damian Sho Silva and another state commissioner, Cardoso.[83] Efeijuda is a popular dish relished by many Lagos Brazilians. It is made of black beans, cooked in an earthen pot to retain that special, original African aroma. When the beans are well cooked, it is mixed with beef, especially parts from the ear, leg and intestine. Next to the Efeijuda is the *feijao* (or *fraijana*) diet of beans and *gari* (cassava).

The BDA has also sponsored group visits to Brazil to supplement the visits of individual Brazilian descendants who have family or commercial connections with Brazil. For example, in 1982 the Union arranged a trip during which three Afro-Brazilian descendants – Mr Nestor Carrena, Elder Abiodun da Souza, and Mrs Yewande Oyediran (née da Rocha) – travelled to Brazil.[84] In Brazil, this group discovered the many similarities between Nigerian and Brazilian culture. During the trip, da Souza renewed contact with his great grandfather's relatives in Brazil. He also found out that Yoruba Orisa continue to thrive in Brazil. Mrs Thomas, who has visited

Brazil several times, says that in Brazil you still find Bahian women frying bean cakes, fish and dodo for sale, just like in Nigeria. Her daughter, Mrs Oyediran mentioned an occasion in 1982 when she was taken to one of the Candomblé temples in Bahia. In her words, the Bahian priestess, speaking in fluent Yoruba, described herself as 'Emi omo Ososa, Emi omo Abeokuta, Ilu baba mi o wa labe Olumo' (I am from Ososa...and Abeokuta, my father's town is under the Olumo rock.) While another man, whose age was put at 101 years in 1982, in an Oriki, traced his roots to Ijesa: 'Emi omo Owa Jalorun, Omo Ijesa, Afin ni won ti gbe [sic] mi' (I, descendant of Owa Jalorun...of Ijesa, I was borne in the palace.) Mrs Oyediran was particularly fascinated with the fusion of Orisa and Catholism in candomblé Brazilian house.[85] Pa Paul Bamgbose corroborates Mrs Oyediran. He gave an account of his journey to Salvador, which coincided with that of the Pope in 1974. In his words:

> Iya olorisas and babaolorisas, all of them came out to meet him [Pope] with their pots, 'kotop and with their herbal leaves and concoctions openly displayed and they were dancing to the beat of the batakoto up to the steps of the Cathedral...and then from a distance there came the call, '*Omisasegun*,' then came the response, *ewe a je*.[86]

Brazilians visiting Nigeria make a point of visiting the Aguda community. Often, they visit Jankara market to buy kolanuts, bitter kola and parrot feathers for Candomblé rituals.[87] Followers of candomblé in Bahia periodically look to Nigeria as their spiritual capital, 'just as Mecca is to the Muslims, so is Nigeria to us' says Osunade Rodriquez, a member of Ile Ashe 'Opo Afonja.' Quite a number of Brazilians have come to Nigeria for religious reasons. It is this spiritual quest that brought a Brazilian couple – Emilio and Grace Rodriquez – to Nigeria in July 1989. Emilio was a Sango worshipper, while Grace follows Osun. Finally, towards greater cooperation between Nigeria and Brazil, the BDA in Lagos decided, during the 1989 carnival, on regular exchange visits between Nigeria and Brazil by Afro-Brazilians of both countries; and they got the Brazilian airline, Varig, to support the plan.[88]

CONCLUSION

This paper sets out to discuss linkages between Brazil and Nigeria through the agency of Afro-Brazilians in Lagos. It seeks to find who these people were then, and are today, their history and the evolution of the community. It establishes that while trade was the genesis of this relationship over the years, it has become cultural and, in many respects, psychological. Afro-

Brazilians in Lagos began as products of Brazilians who bought slaves in West Africa for export to mainly Portuguese and Spanish colonies in the Americas. Soon after, there began a trickle, and then flood of Nigerians towards the Americas, especially Brazil and Cuba. At the same time, however, Brazilians were settling down in Lagos, starting businesses, families and, most importantly, making friends locally. With the collapse of the slave trade there was a reverse trend, with freed slaves, their descendants and families returning to Africa, many to Lagos. Among the returnees were those with only Brazilian culture, or whose families remained in Brazil. What followed was a series of journeys between the two countries for work, education, quest for family roots, trade opportunities, religious fulfilment and tourism. Undoubtedly, the traffic has slowed down considerably, but one only needs to walk the streets of central Lagos to discover the persistence of Brazil culture.

ENDNOTES

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13

THE AGUDA OF BENIN:
From the Memory of Brazil to the Construction of a Community Identity

ELISÉE SOUMONNI

In the era of the transatlantic slave trade, the Bight of Benin, extending from present-day Ghana to modern Nigeria, was generally referred to as the Slave Coast. It has been estimated that over 2,000,000 Africans[1] were forcibly shipped from various localities of this section of the West African coast to the Americas. Within this region, Ouidah[2], conquered in 1727 by the expanding inland kingdom of Dahomey, was 'the most important port of embarkation, accounting for over half of total exports from the Bight of Benin'. If, over the entire period of the Atlantic slave trade, as many as 60 per cent of these exports 'are thought to have gone to Brazil'[3], a substantial number of African returnees from Brazil settled in the region of their initial departure. It is therefore not surprising that the Bight of Benin in general, and Dahomey in particular, are the focus of many studies of Afro-Brazilian returnees and their communities.[4] Though these studies rightly point out the experience and memory of Brazil as the common heritage of Afro-Brazilian communities of the Bight of Benin, they tend to overlook the local variations in the construction of their community identity. With particular reference to the Aguda of Benin, this paper attempts to address this important and overlooked dimension without which it is difficult to account for the integration of returnees from Brazil into the new African milieu.[5]

THE EMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF THE AGUDA COMMUNITY

The Brazilian Diaspora to the Slave Coast is generally understood in terms of the return movement of enslaved Africans, a movement that accelerated from the 1830s, in the aftermath of the slave rebellion in Bahia. If it is true that the establishment and development of Afro-Brazilian communities along the West African coast is largely a nineteenth century phenomenon,

this development cannot, however, be fully understood without taking into account, in a *longue durée* perspective, 'the earlier phases of this historical process.'[6] With specific reference to the Aguda of Benin, this formative period is to be traced back to the very beginning of the seventeenth century. The presence of Portuguese and Brazilians was noted in Allada as early as 1601 and, by the end of the century, similar presence was reported in Ouidah.[7] Diplomatic contacts between Portugal, Spain and Allada also took place during the seventeenth century, with attempts to convert members of the royal family to Christianity. However, the number of Europeans settled on the coast was too limited to have a major social and cultural impact. The situation changed significantly from the eighteenth century. Not only did the number of resident European slave traders increase, but many of them also married African women and fathered offspring.[8] This was the major trend in the three European forts built in Ouidah: the French in 1671; the English in 1681; and the Portuguese in 1721. In and around these commercial establishments emerged an embryonic cosmopolitan community, made up of European traders and their mulatto offspring. The roots of the increasingly dominant Brazilian dimension of this community can be traced to the establishment, in 1721, of the Portuguese Fort São João de Ajudá, whose links were with Brazil rather than directly with Portugal. The directors of the fort were appointed, not by the king of Portugal, but by the viceroy of Bahia. The location of the fort was to become the centre of the original Afro-Brazilian community that spread west and east of the notorious slaving port. It is this community – made up of Portuguese, based mainly in Brazil, native-born Brazilians, and the offspring of their unions with local women – that would continue to grow with the return of liberated Africans from Brazil in the nineteenth century.[9]

Surprisingly, the British abolition of slavery in 1807, and its subsequent international crusade to end the slave trade, contributed to its expansion to Brazil. While the new development compelled both British and French slave-traders to depart from their forts, the vacuum thus left was filled by Brazilian traders and their associates. The most influential and best known of these Brazilians was Francisco Félix de Souza, whose name remains closely associated with the Aguda of present-day Republic of Benin, heir of both the old slave-trading kingdom of Dahomey and of the French colony of the same name. The history of this Afro-Brazilian community cannot be properly grasped without taking into account the socio-political environment in which de Souza expanded and consolidated a trade that has ceased to be legitimate as from 1807.[10] This environment was, to a large extent, a by-product of Dahomey's resistance to international pressure for ending

the obnoxious traffic in human beings. Dahomey's defiant attitude was not only welcome, but also fuelled by the small community of Brazilians who, in Ouidah, kept the trade alive despite its abolition. Thus, Francisco Félix de Souza became a close associate of king Gezo, whom he helped to accede to the throne through a coup d'état that overthrew Adandozan in 1818.[11] From then till his death in 1849, de Souza, commanding the title of *Chacha*,[12] was the chief intermediary between the king of Dahomey and European traders operating in Ouidah. Throughout this period, he remained committed to the slave trade like most of the members of his Afro-Brazilian community, some of whom, expelled from Lagos and Badagry under British influence, took refuge in Porto-Novo, Ouidah and Agoué.

The British action in Lagos and Badagry, combined with the political climate in Dahomey, did contribute to consolidating Francisco Félix de Souza and the Afro-Brazilian community of Ouidah. The notorious slaving port of Dahomey was not subjected to the same pressure. King Gezo was not Kosoko. He had no Akintoye, or a puppet rival, who could replace him if forced out of power. Another factor to be taken into account in the expansion and growth of the Aguda community is that the French, unlike the British, were less committed to forcing the Dahomean authorities to sign an anti-slave-trading treaty, thus leaving the position and status of the *Chacha* in Ouidah unchallenged.

Though Francisco de Souza's name became closely associated with the Afro-Brazilian community of the historical city, it should be borne in mind that the sense of Brazil and the roots of this community are to be traced to the surrounding environment of the Portuguese fort, administered from Brazil, Portugal's colony. The location of the fort thus became the centre of the original community. However, de Souza was unquestionably the one who gave character to the emerging community. While he remained active in slave trading despite abolition, he was welcoming towards descendents of those he kept selling into slavery in the Americas, helping them to settle in and around Ouidah. The western part of the Slave Coast, made up of Grand-Popo, Agoué, and Petit-Popo (modern Aneho in present-day Togo), where returning Afro-Brazilians settled in relatively significant numbers was, in a sense, an extension of his Ouidah headquarters. Yet, those localities emerged as convenient alternative ports of embarkation in the context of the anti-slave trade campaign.

There is no doubt that the development of Ouidah, as well as the growth of its Afro-Brazilian community in the nineteenth century, was largely Francisco Félix de Souza's legacy.[13] The house he built in the 1830s became the centre of the area occupied to the present day by his descendents,

clients and associates. Originally called *Chacha* ward, it subsequently became known as 'Brazil.'[14] De Souza is also credited with the establishment of two other quarters: *Maro*, settled by Afro-Brazilian returnees in the aftermath of the 1835 Bahia slave rebellion, and *Zomaï*, believed to have been built 'as a combined country retreat and storehouse for goods'. Apart from the above three quarters, Boya and Quénum, de Souza's associates, founded their own wards within the city. 'Five of the twelve quarters of Ouidah were thus created by de Souza or his associates.'[15]

In spite of this impressive legacy, Francisco Félix de Souza was not, of course, the only Brazilian slave trader operating in and around Ouidah. Particularly worth mentioning, and probably second to him, was José Domingo Martins, also known as Domingo Martinez, who set up initially at Lagos in the 1830s, relocated to Porto-Novo in 1846 and, after de Souza's death in 1849, established a second residence in Ouida.[16] In fact, Domingo Martinez's emergence as a leading slave and palm oil trader in the Bight of Benin largely benefited from de Souza's activities and influence in Ouidah. He came to the Bight of Benin in the mid-1830s 'as one of the crew of a slave ship consigned to the *Chacha*. However, as a result of the capture of the ship by the British anti-slave squadron, he survived for about five years in Ouidah 'on the charity of de Souza.'[17] He must have learnt a lot from his host, judging by the way his business was to prosper in Lagos and Porto-Novo. It is not surprising therefore that he moved to Ouidah after his mentor's death. The connection with de Souza was consolidated by marriage to one of his daughters.[18] Like de Souza, Martinez had many offspring with local women. This practice of intermarriage between Europeans and African women, which can be traced to the eighteenth century, was the initial process of expansion of the Aguda community before the more substantial influx of returnees in the aftermath of the 1835 Bahia slave rebellion. Returnees continued the practice till the early colonial administration. As a result of the influential position of the Brazilian elements among Europeans in Ouidah during the nineteenth century, descendents of Joseph Olivier de Montaguère, the director of the French fort between 1775 and 1786, gave a Portuguese form to their family name and became known as d'Oliveira.[19]

The French colonial conquest of Dahomey by the end of the nineteenth century did not stop the return movement from Brazil, but encouraged it instead, as will be shown in this paper. A comprehensive assessment of this movement is however difficult. The numbers of those who disembarked at the various points of the coast remain unknown. A list was drawn up only of returnees whose education and expertise could be helpful to the colonial administration, but this was far from a census.[20] It is however clear that most

of the returnees concentrated in coastal cities and tended not to move inland. Thus, by the beginning of the twentieth century, they constituted important nuclei in these cities where, despite the vicissitudes of history, their cultural legacy is most visible today. [21]

THE PROCESS OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY

If, as argued in the introductory part of this paper, the memory and experience of Brazil constitute Afro-Brazilians' common heritage and the cornerstone of their community identity, it is worth noting the environment around European commercial centres found by returnees of the nineteenth century. It was not by chance that returnees from Brazil in the nineteenth century disembarked at Ouidah and settled in the coastal area, including those who could trace their native village in the interior. They discovered aspects of the Brazilian life and culture with which they were familiar, incorporating elements of African culture they had taken with them to Brazil.

Francisco Félix de Souza could be seen as an embodiment of this kind of métissage *culturel.* He adopted the basic characteristics of African culture and of Dahomean traditions. His alliance with Gezo, whom he helped to ascend to the throne in 1818, was concluded with a blood pact, in a purely local tradition. His family life was that of a chief, or even of an African king, with an impressive number of wives and children.[22] He died and was buried, not in Brazil, but in his family compound of Ouidah where his mausoleum is a tourist attraction today. It could not have been otherwise. The *Chacha* was so integrated into the local culture that he became, despite his Catholic faith, a *Vodun* worshipper with his own family *Vodun* cult.[23] De Souza's cultural adaptability provided returnees of the nineteenth century with an environment conducive to meeting the initial challenge of their re-integration with the local populations.

These Afro-Brazilian returnees were confronted with two basic problems: the assertion of an Afro-Brazilian identity and the necessary interaction and integration with the local populations. Interaction with other groups and progressive integration in the new social milieu is always a key factor in the success or failure of new immigrants. In this respect, Afro-Brazilian returnees' relationship with indigenous African communities was an issue of paramount importance. How the newcomers would be received in the first instance depended on prevailing local conditions, as previously argued,[24] but also on the nature of initial relationships established. The enslaved Africans in Brazil had been able to keep in touch with their African regions of origin in a number of ways, long before the abolition of slavery. The Aguda community of Benin, like the Brazilian community

itself, was forged, 'not through a process of one-way migration, but rather through the maintenance of continuous contacts across the Atlantic.'[25] This transatlantic network of business and social relations provided, throughout the period of the slave trade, a framework of interaction between foreign traders, their associates, agents, and members of indigenous coastal communities. The way returnees from Brazil in the nineteenth century interacted with these various categories varied over time and space. With respect to indigenous communities, the procurement of land for settlement upon arrival, particularly in urban areas, was not a source of tension, as experienced in Lagos. Moreover, the return movement, even in the 1830s, was not sufficiently massive, or so sudden as to provoke shock or rejection from indigenous populations.

The growth of the Aguda community occurred, as illustrated by the career of Brazilian slave traders settled along the coast, in the context of the international campaign for the abolition of the slave trade. Putting pressure on Dahomean authorities and their associate Brazilians to give up slave trading and devote their energy to legitimate trade in agricultural products such as palm oil, became the pretext of Anglo-French rivalry, forewarning the scramble for Africa. The Aguda, as de Souza's protégés, were associated with those encouraging the pursuit of the banned trade.

However, at the time of the colonial conquest, the French discovered all the assistance they could get from them in setting up their administrative machinery. As a matter of fact, they were the only local elite that could provide the needed staff for positions such as interpreter or secretary. Many of them were also skilled artisans, qualified for practical jobs.[26] Conscious of their usefulness, the Governor of the colony authorized in 1895 an association 'aimed at encouraging the return to the slave coast of former Dahomean subjects and their descendents, subjects at present in the Americas.'[27] It is not unlikely that the colonial administration itself initiated the creation of this association. As a matter of fact, an early administrative directive drew attention to 'a population called Creole of about five hundred people, composed in large part of Negroes returning from Brazil' who speak Portuguese and who 'have attained a high level of civilization'. 'When', the directive goes on, 'French education has penetrated this population, when the day-to-day influence of our institutions and certain measures have made them ours, we will find strong support for the civilization of the region in the Creole group.'[28]

One of the immediate measures of the new administration to achieve this objective was substituting the Portuguese language, one of the essential features of the Aguda identity, with French. The Afro-Brazilian community's

hostile reaction to such a step was a reflection of the deep-rooted nature of this identity.

SKETCHING OUT AGUDA IDENTITY

Outlining the main features of the Aguda community identity is not as easy as it may appear. The historical background that emphasizes the memory and experience of Brazil tends to 'see in the culture of the Aguda only a looking-backward, a local *saudadismo*'.[29] The construction of their community identity, though rooted in the past, is a dynamic process, relevant to the present and open to the future. This dynamic is consonant with the evolution of the community whose composition was, over time, becoming more diversified with the incorporation of new elements. This incorporation started, as already pointed out, before the nineteenth century, and included not only Portuguese and Brazilian slave traders established at the coast, but also – though a tiny minority – Spanish and French.[30] As a result, descendents of these Euro-American citizens, as well as returnees from Brazil and Cuba, are indiscriminately referred to as Brazilians or Afro-Brazilians.

Progressively included in the community were also elements whose connection with it is remote. Not all the families in contemporary Benin with Brazilian names from the era of the slave trade have Brazilian blood in their veins, have ever travelled to Brazil, or are descendents of returnees from Brazil. They have become 'Brazilianized', so to speak, as a result of their ancestors' long association, in whatever position, with Portuguese, Brazilian and Afro-Brazilian traders on the coast.[31] If, before the establishment of the colonial administration, a form of endogamy was common practice in the Aguda community, progressive and successful integration with indigenous or autochthonous populations led to intermarriage with outsiders. Subsequently, the Aguda community of contemporary Benin, by its size and composition, significantly differs from its nineteenth century background or status.

Yet, such a deep and radical structural transformation has not altered an identity constructed over a long historical process around the memory of Brazil. No matter how remote, vague or imaginary this memory may be, it continues to be kept alive and re-enacted by traditions and experiences that successive generations of returnees brought with them from Brazil. Illustrative of this fact is the 'buriyan,'[32] the Dahomean form of the Brazilian 'burinha' festival, performed in commemoration of Nosso Senhor do Bonfin who became the patron of the Aguda. Beyond its entertainment dimension, the 'buriyan' is a cultural expression of the Aguda community's collective memory of exile, as well as the manifestation of its identity and solidarity. Whether Christian, Muslim, or practitioner of African religions, all the

Aguda take part in the commemoration of do Bonfin with an ecumenical spirit. But because this community has incorporated a diversity of external elements, the 'buriyan' has become a very popular national event. Today, in Ouidah, three major groups keep alive the 'buriyan' tradition: the das Neves family group, whose ancestor was José Joaquim das Neves, a storekeeper in the Portuguese fort of Ouidah in 1793; the de Souza family group; and the Aguidissou family group, initially da Costa and a native of São Tome e Principe according to tradition.[33]

What, to sum up, could be regarded as the main features or pillars of the Aguda community's identity?

The 'buriyan' festival just cited illustrates the significance of religion in the construction of this community identity. In this respect, the focus in many studies is on Christianity and its encounter with African traditional religions, both in Brazil and on the Bight of Benin. In Lagos for instance, as observed by Carneiro da Cunha,[34] Afro-Brazilians' association with the Roman Catholic Church was 'so much so that the word Aguda came to refer indiscriminately to Brazilians and Catholics alike' despite a number of Moslems among them. The situation in Ouidah, Porto-Novo, Agoué and Grand-Popo was not basically different. In the era of the Atlantic slave trade, conversion of 'pagan' Africans to Christianity, equated with Europe's civilizing mission, implied the baptism of enslaved Africans in the Americas, whether Muslim or practitioner of traditional religions. The subsequent religious syncretism, used as a strategy of survival in Brazil, was to reveal itself as a useful tool of re-integration in their new social milieu.

Despite the expansion of the community and vicissitudes of history, this religious experience in foreign lands remains a source of inspiration for peaceful coexistence among citizens of different ethnic and religious groupings. Olabiyi Babalola Yai[35] underlined the specific contributions of the Aguda community in this respect. Though on their return the Aguda patronized the development of Christianity, which they were forced to embrace while in Brazil, the nature of their Christianity was dissonant with that of the missionaries who, like Father Borghero, denounced their placid propensity for polygamy and their religion in which they saw 'a monstrous mixture of paganism, Christian practices and fetishist superstitions.'[36] Probably one of the most visible traits of this 'monstrous mixture' in Ouidah today is the location of the temple devoted to pythons, popular local deities, in front of the Catholic Cathedral!

Returning Muslem Afro-Brazilians and their descendents had a lot in common with their Christian counterparts. They brought to Benin the

spirit of this Islam that transcended ethnic and religious barriers in the planning of the 1835 slave rebellion in Bahia. This Islam from Brazil was less concerned with doctrine than with the existential fate of the society as a whole, and especially the Aguda community. It contributed to an intelligent cohabitation, and often collaboration, between Muslim and Christian Aguda, as well as their peaceful coexistence as a community with other traditional religious groups.[37] Many Afro-Brazilian families, such as the Paraisos, the da Silvas, and the do Regos, have a Christian branch and a Muslim branch. In Porto-Novo in particular, Muslims continue to bear two and even three names: Muslim, Christian, and African, symbolic of their African religious or cultural tradition.

The spirit of this peaceful interaction between Muslim and Christian Aguda continues to inspire relations between various religious groups in contemporary Benin. It has also left its imprints in early churches and mosques built by returning Afro-Brazilians. In Porto-Novo, the principal mosque built in the early colonial era, is strikingly similar to the Brazilian model of the Catholic Church that inspired it.[38] The same goes for Ouidah's central mosque whose architectural style is similar to that of the cathedral.[39]

The memory and experience of Brazil has also left its imprints in the languages spoken in the areas where Afro-Brazilians settled. It should be borne in mind that by the end of the nineteenth century, Portuguese was about to become an official language of Dahomey, a situation that was incompatible the the French colonial policy of assimilation. The move to reverse the trend was already discernible in Ouidah as early as 1862 when missionaries of the Société des Missions Africaines de Lyon (SMA) established a school with Portuguese as language of instruction, in accordance with the expectations of Afro-Brazilians, but a source of anger for the French officials and agents living in the city. When French was finally imposed by the newly established colonial administration in place of Portuguese, the Aguda community was deprived of an important component of its identity. All the same, the legacy of the dominance of Portuguese on the West African coast over three centuries is still noticeable in a number of languages spoken today in Benin, including the French language! Olabiyi Babalola Yai,[40] a reference and an authority on the subject, has given some illustrative examples of this phenomenon. Thus, *asinola*, in Fon; *dotóò*, in Fon and Yoruba; and piron in local French, derive respectively from Portuguese *senhora*, *doutor* and *piraào*. *Pirao*, in fact, transcends language or vocabulary. It implies, such as *moyo* and *feijoada*, Afro-Brazilian diet traditions that have become a national heritage of contemporary Benin.

CONCLUSION

The memory of Brazil around which the Aguda community's identity has been constructed is not a myth. Vestiges of the legacy of Brazil's long involvement in the Atlantic slave trade are visible in family names, religious traditions, festivals, dishes, and architecture. An assessment of this memory and of the process of community identity it gave rise to is not, however, an easy and straightforward exercise. The perceptions and dimensions of memory and history vary. They are constructed and reconstructed over time and space. The same is probably valid with respect to the memory of Brazil and the subsequent construction of the Aguda community's identity. Francisco Félix de Souza, a central figure of this community, as highlighted in this paper, is an illustration of this changing perspective. Though of foreign origin, he had become a big Dahomean chief, 'practically naturalized' by the time he died in 1849. Today, his numerous offspring represent him as the head of an extended Afro-Brazilian family rather than the notorious slave trader he was on the West African coast. A critical reconsideration of his legacy is therefore called for. Otherwise, it will be difficult to properly grasp the nature, content, and implication of the Aguda community's identity. This identity transcends ethnic and family bonds. The community is made up of several ethnic groups of present-day Benin, including, among others, Fon, Mahi, Yoruba and Hausa. As in Brazil, it has not only integrated these various groups, but has also expanded to such an extent that it facilitated their insertion, as an original community, into their new social environment.

ENDNOTES

1. David Eltis and David Richardson, 'West Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade: New Evidence of Long-Run Trends', in *Slavery & Abolition*, 18, 1 (1997)16-35.
2. Although 'Ouidah' is the spelling that is current nowadays, the city's name appears in various other forms in European sources between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries: Whydah in English, Fida in Dutch, Juda in French, and Ajuda in Portuguese. However, its indigenous name, still used by its inhabitants, is Glehue, literally a farm-house. See Robin Law, *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving 'Port', 1727-1892* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004) 18-19.
3. Robin Law, 'The Evolution of the Brazilian Community in Ouidah', in Kristin Mann and Edna G. Bay (eds), *Rethinking the African Diaspra. The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil* (Frank Cass, London, 2001) 22.
4. Pierre Verger's *Flux et reflux de la traite des Nègres entre le Golfe du Bénin et Bahia de*

Todos os Santos, du XVIIe au XIXe siècle (Mouton, Paris, 1968), translated into English under the (inadequate) title: *Trade Relations between the Bight of Benin and Biafra from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century* (University of Ibadan Press, 1976), remains an important source material for the study of these communities. In addition to major research works published since then on the three continents involved in the transatlantic slave trade, Jerry Michael Turner's unpblished Ph.D thesis entitled '*Les Brésiliens: the impact of former Brazilian slaves upon Dahomey* (Boston University, 1975), is worth mentioning. A number of these useful references will be appropriately acknowledged in the course of this paper.

5. For a discussion of these local variations, see Elisée Soumonni, 'The Afro-Brazilian communities of Ouidah and Lagos in the nineteenth century: a comparative analysis', in José C. Curto and Renée Soulodre-La France (eds), *Africa and the Americas: Interconnections during the Slave Trade* (Africa World Press, 2005, 231-242.
6. Robin Law and Kristin Mann, 'West Africa in the Atlantic Community: The Case of the Slave Coast', in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, Volume LVI, Number 2, April 1999, 315.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 316.
9. Elisée Soumonni, 'The Afro-Brazilian Communities of Ouidah and Lagos in the Nineteenth Century: a Comparative Analysis', op cit.
10. Francisco Félix de Souza appears in many documents of the slave trade era, more particularly in British Parliamentary Papers and various committee reports on the slave trade. He is also the subject of several published research works, including, among others: Alberto da Costa e Silva, *Francisco Félix de Souza, Mercador de Escravos* (Editora Nova Fronteira, Rio de Janeiro, 2004); Robin Law, 'Francisco Félix de Souza in West Africa, 1800-1849', in José C. Curto and Paul E. Lovejoy (eds), *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil During the Era of Slavery* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2004); David Ross, 'The first Chacha of Whydah: Francisco Félix de Souza', in *Odu*, New Series 2, 1969.
11. The traditional picture of Adandozan as a wicked ruler who had to be forced to abdicate is one of the most controversial issues in Dahomey's political history. For an insight into the controversy, see Elisée Soumonni, 'The compatibility of the slave and palm oil trades in Dahomey, 1818-1858', in Robin Law (ed.), *From Slave Trade to Legitimate Commerce. The commercial transition in nineteenth century West Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 1995, 79-81).
12. The etymology and meaning of the name 'Chacha' varies from one tradition to the other. It was probably a nickname de Souza was given because he

constantly used the word (meaning 'quick' among the Gbe-speaking group) in urging his slaves to work'. Robin Law, *Ouidah. The Social History of a West African Slaving 'Port', 1727-1892* , op cit 167, footnote 75).

13. Robin Law, 'The evolution of the Afro-Brazilian community in Ouidah', op cit.; Elisée Soumonni, 'Some reflections on the Brazilian legacy in Dahomey', in Kristin Mann and Edna G. Bay (eds), *Rethinking the African Diaspora* ... op cit., 24-26; Robin Law, Ouidah. The social history ... op cit., chaper 5, 155-188.
14. Robin Law, *Ouidah. The social history* op cit., p 183.
15. Ibid., 184.
16. Robin Law and Kristin Mann, 'West Africa in the Atlantic Community: The case of the Slave Coast', op cit., 324; David A. Ross, 'The career of Domingo Martinez in the Bight of Benin, 1833-64', in *Journal of African History*, 6 (1965), 79-90.
17. David A. Ross, 'The career of Domingo Martinez' op cit. 79.
18. Robin Law, *Ouidah*, op cit., 216.
19. Robin Law and Kristin Mann, 'West Africa in the Atlantic Community', op cit., 317.
20. Anne-Marie C. Sanvi, née da Matha, Les Métis et les Brésiliens dans la colonie du Dahomey (MA thesis, Université Nationale du Bénin, 1977), 69-70.
21. Elisée Soumonni, 'Some reflections ...' op cit, 66.
22. The tradition has it that he left, at his death, '25 boys and 25 girls, chosen and recognized by him among the 312 children of his 302 wives'! see Reynier, 'Eléments sur la reorganization du comandement indigène à Ouidah (1917)', in *Mémoire du Bénin. Maériaux d'histoire.* 2 (1993), 41. According to Prince de Joinville, quoted by Pierre Verger, *Trade Relations* ... op cit., 407, 'he is the father of eighty male children, the girls have not been counted. All of his sons are well brought up I see them walking about dressed in white and wearing Panama hats. They are generally looking handsome mulattoes'.
23. Dana Rush, 'Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Portuguese Arts and Cultures along Coastal Benin', Unpublished paper presented at the symposium on Rethinking the African Diaspora: The Making of a Black Atlantic World in the Bight of Benin and Brazil, Emory University, Atlanta, April 1998.
24. I have presented a comparative prospective of these prevailing local conditions in my 'The Afro-Brazilian communities of Ouidah and Lagos in the nineteenth century: a comparative analysis', in José C. Curto and Renée Soulodre-La-France (eds), *Africa and the Americas: Interconnections during the slave trade,* Africa World Press, 2005, 231-242.
25. Robin Law and Kristin Mann, 'West Africa in the Atlantic Community', op cit., 329.
26. R. Cornevin, *Histoire du Dahomey* (Berger-Levrault, Paris, 1962), 65.

27. Journal Officiel du Dahomey, 1er Octobre 1898, quoted in D. Ronen, *Dahomey: Between Tradition and Modernity* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1975), 33-5.
28. Archives d'Outre-Mer, Aix-en-Provence, dossier: Dahomey, general, quoted in D. Ronen, Dahomey ... op cit.
29. Olabiyi Babalola Yai, 'The Identity, Contributions, and Ideology of the Aguda (Afro-Brazilians) of the Gulf of Benin: a reinterpetation', in Kristin Mann and Edna G. Bay (eds), *Rethinking the African Diaspora*, op cit., 74.
30. In addition to the d'Oliveira of French origin, it is worth mentioning, among others, the case of Juan Jsé Zangronis, a son of a Havana-based Spanish merchant and a slave-dealer established at Ouidah where he 'clearly traded in association rather than in rivalry with de Souza'. He died and was buried in Ouidah. His descendents survive in a Portuguese or Brazilian form 'la famille Sangronio', see Robin Law, *Ouidah*... op cit., 173; Simone de Souza, *La Famille de Souza du Bénin-Togo* (Cotonou, 1992).
31. Elisée Soumonni, 'Some Reflections on the Brazilian Legacy... op cit., 70.
32. It was appropriately termed 'la dance de la mémoire' pr Rachida A. de Souza, 'La danse de la mémoire: le buriyan', in *Ouidah à travers ses fêtes et ptrimonies familiaux* (DPC-WAMP, Editions du Lamboyant, Cotonou, 1995).
33. Rachida A. de Souza, op cit., 55-56.
34. Carneiro da Cunha, *From Slave Quarters to Town Houses: Brazilian Architecture in Nigeria and the Peope's Repblic of Benin* (Nobel, São Paulo, 1985), 30.
35. Olabiyi Babalola Yai, The Identity, Contributions ...' op cit., 75-79.
36. Ibid. 76.
37. Ibid. 78.
38. Alain Sinou and Bachir Oloudé eds, *Porto-Novo, ville d'Afrique noire* (Parenthèses/ ORSTOM, Marseille, 1988) 128-31.
39. Alain Sinou, *Le Compoir de Ouidah. Une ville africaine singulière* (Editions Karthala, Paris, 1995) 161-163.
40. 'The identity, contributions ...' op cit. 79.

14

ANTONIO OLINTO'S THE WATER HOUSE:

Creative Configurations of Afro-Brazilian Return to Roots and African Culture

FEMI OJO-ADE

> This return seemed to her more and more essential, as if she were winning back a life which had been lost. (Antonio Olinto, *The Water House*, New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 1970:32)
>
> They shouldn't be allowed to change people's names. (*Ibid.* 89)
>
> English is a foreign language. Portuguese is a foreign language. What we ought to speak is Yoruba. (*Ibid.* 157)
>
> The dead are light and heavy to bear ... the assurance they give is continuity and fear, what they offer is wholeness and disruption. (*Ibid.* 18)

INTRODUCTION: MEMORIES OF SLAVERY AND SURVIVAL

One remembers slavery: the dehumanizing process of ensnaring human beings like animals to satisfy genuine hunger for flesh; the chains binding them together in a convoy like convicts, captured by civilization in its pronounced programme of sensible security for society, liable to fall prey to the machinations of murderous monsters; the hell reserved for the captives in the bellies of beasts named ships. One remembers slavery: the crossing of the endless seas often serving as codeless cemeteries for bodies rebelling against the savagery committed by self-proclaimed saviours; the survivors marooned on the shores of new beginnings and dead-ends in the realities of a marketplace where they, chattel, were haggled over by potential owners according to their physical constitution. One remembers slavery: life on plantations no better than concentration camps. As with

every human enterprise, there was a graphic curve in the content of the savage character of the masters of the New World, from the subtle and soft demeanor to the blatantly barbaric behaviour. In North and South America and the Caribbean, sites of slavery abounded. Brazil was one of them.

Researchers interested in comparison and contrast are usually in agreement that the Brazilian experience was more humane, or less savage, than in many other places. However, our interest here is not in comparative analysis; for scientific data, curves, ladders showing increasing or decreasing degrees of denigration and dehumanization too often serve the purpose of subtly explaining away, or decreasing the criminality of acts and institutions such as slavery. We affirm that slavery, the forced journey of African men, women and children across the Atlantic to destinations where they worked like horses and were treated worse than dogs, where they contributed to the construction of civilizations from which they stood for long excluded. We assert that, in every kind of enslavement in the New World, one constant was the spirit of survival, an essential aspect of which was the dream of returning home to Africa. Even where the dream might make no sense in physical terms, it still served the purpose of keeping the soul intact, the psyche strong, and the total being always urged to maintain rebellion against systemic dehumanization, and to express and re-invent the original culture in an alien land.

Antonio Olinto's novel offers one example of the dream of return realized by an Afro-Brazilian family. It recounts in a sinuous, fascinating and hypnotic fashion, the preparations, the arrival, the settlement back in Lagos, and the continuity of the family through three generations. The tale, and some might deem it a *tall tale*, allows us to discuss a myriad of issues concerning returnees and return, including the content of their character, their relationship with those they found in the original home, their contributions to African society, their identity and culture, and, perhaps most significantly, the meanings, mysteries and thrust of return in the larger order of humanity. It is an interesting combination of realities and imagination. First, the realities: we meet returnees where, saddled with their myriad mysteries and dreams and dilemmas, they settle down in the Brazilian quarter. One of the focal points is the Water House where Esan da Rocha, followed by his son Candido, builds enormous wealth on the business of selling water and other commodities. Other Afro-Brazilian settlements, in Dahomey (Ouidah) and the Gold Coast (the tabom community) are represented, with references to the Portuguese fort and to the famous Xaxa de Sousa who enriched himself through the slave trade.

The lives of the characters are woven around socio cultural events and West Africa's colonial experience, struggle and attainment of independence in the 1960s, with the story culminating in a coup d'état in the fictional country called Zorei. The major creation by Olinto is Mariana. She arrives in Lagos as a child and grows to become not only the matriarch of the family, but a wealthy businesswoman and a very influential political figure. Her persona represents the real-life da Rocha.

From the start, the author's identity alerts one to issues of society and culture with regards to the African homeland and Brazil. Antonio Olinto Marques da Rocha is Brazilian, but not Afro-Brazilian. He was born in Ubá, state of Minas Gerais. He studied philosophy and theology and almost became a priest. A polyglot, he is a professor of Portuguese, French, English, and literature. He has a passion for African music and culture. While visiting Africa, he discovered Afro-Brazilian culture, as well as Brazil's presence in African culture. A member of Brazil's Academy of Letters, he and another prominent Brazilian writer, the Bahian Jorge Amado, were made *Oba of Shango* by the Candomblé house, Ile Axé Opô Afonjá.[1]

It is therefore not surprising that Olinto's novel pays homage to the orishas, while describing aspects of similarity and continuity between the religious practices of Bahia and West Africa. Briefly, the novel recounts the return of an ex-slave, Catarina dos Santos (nee Ainá), and her family (her free-born daughter, Epifânia, and the latter's three children, Mariana, Emilia, and Antônio) to Africa.

The late-nineteenth century journey begins from Piau in Minas Gerais, Catarina's destination as a slave, to Juiz de Fora, to Rio de Janeiro, to Bahia, and on to Lagos on a ship named *Esperança* (Hope). It all begins with the flood in Piau, when Mariana, aged ten, is dragged out of her bed at dawn, saved from certain death by an unknown person; the solace and safety of that shoulder, mixed with the fear constitute the complex basis of an adventure and memories that will last a life time.

Olinto uses an omnipresent first-person narrator that claims oneness with the heroine, Mariana:

> I could have chosen the device of a separate narrator, removed from the events, but Mariana's story is so much a part of me that it seems I can only pass it on by putting myself inside it and telling it as if I myself were there, at every move, taking part in the scenes, hearing the words spoken and experiencing the emotions of the girl's long journey.[2]

This narrative device enhances, to a certain extent, the authenticity of the story, transforming fiction into fact, as it were; however, it also subtly injects the author's viewpoints and biases into the psyche of his characters, in terms of their expressed beliefs, opinions and attitudes. This is of particular importance, given the subject of slavery and the return of slaves to Africa: the relationship between freed slaves and ex-masters; between returnees on the continent and the local population; returnees' views of the new African home and the people; issues of culture and religion, and socialization; the content of character of returnees. Indeed, Olinto's style is so realistic, or modernist, as to make the unwary reader forget that this is fiction. One runs the risk of sharing the views expressed, while failing to bring to bear upon the text the critical address necessary to evaluate the, at times, controversial position of the heroine and the author. Perhaps the most incontrovertible fact is the novel's sweep of a family's return and settlement over three generations, with its joys and pains, its successes and failures, all blended into the evolution and dynamics of West African colonies in their struggle for, and attainment of, political independence; a process in which members of the Santos family participate prominently.

We are given an explanation of the reason for Catarina's desire to return. She has a memory of the past: on the slave ship, 'her body rose and fell, in the rising and falling her young body came back to her, a menstrual flow had stained the wooden floor with blood, the man who looked after the slaves had come to see what had happened, he had moved her on to another deck, that night he had taken her on the ground, left her lying there naked' (16-17). Her birth-place, her original home, Abeokuta, has always been in her head and on her mind. She misses her people, her family and her friends. Her uncle had sold her off at Lagos.[3] On arrival in Piau, the sold person died, and a new one was born; and on the journey back, the Piau person died, and a new one was being born. This interplay of past and present in memories giving currency to history and heritage, and completing the circle of life, is employed throughout the novel to underscore the continuity and exchange between Africa and the Diaspora. Catarina's example affirms the logic of the return, and the inextricable link between the slave and the freed:

> Catarina was in the past and in the present, she was here and she was in that other ship, the difference in time dissolved, it seemed to have grown less and less until suddenly she saw that she had not even boarded the ship but was still in Abeokuta, under a huge tree.[4]

It is interesting that Catarina seeks out her ex-master at the stopover in Bahia, to assist the family in making money to pay their way back. Uncle Inhaim is the nickname of the man Joaquim dos Santos and he is considered a kind-hearted, magnanimous master-turned-mentor.[5] Life in Bahia is described as joyful, with 'the happy people in the streets' (19), and Catarina actually fears that the return might be truncated and terminated in the first capital of Brazil. Her daughter, Epifânia, serves as counterpoint, expressing her objection to the return, never accepting her Africanity until the end of her life. The contrast makes us appreciate the tenor and thrust of the return, and the glorious life of the heroine, Mariana, as she grows from an innocent child saved from a storm and a flood, to an adult revered as matriarch and family mainstay, as well as a political leader working in tandem with her son towards fulfillment of nationhood.

FAMILY AS NUCLEUS OF COMMUNITY

First and foremost, Olinto foregrounds family, with Catarina the ex-slave as pivot of the return to Africa. This is significant for, contrary to the Eurocentric, patriarchal ethos and experience, a woman heads the family. Such is the impact of slavery: man has been demoted to the level of harnessed beast in the master's plantation while the woman, forcibly separated from her man, has become the master's maid in the big house and, often enough, his midnight bedmate. Catarina recalls daughter Epifânia's conception and birth:

> [She was] thinking odd things, the day when the Negro Julião had run after her, he had stuck his thing right up her, a cock had started up in the bushes just beside them, a warmth had gone through her body, the morning Epifânia was born, they all came to see her... Where was Julião now? He had been sold to a planter in Rio Novo, nobody had heard of him since, the planter's son had come back often, it had got into a habit ... (13)

No wonder there is no male figure in the family. Interestingly enough, the novelist describes it as if it were normal in 'Afro' culture. Throughout the text, he discusses the women's sexual encounters in a manner easily adduced to animalistic instinct. Sex is a necessity, and when a woman is in heat, she is ready to submit herself to any man available. What goes for Catarina goes for her daughter Epifânia, and the latter's daughter Mariana. Epifânia's man disappeared, just as did her mother's (8). Mariana at age ten watches a boy making love to a girl in Rio,

and thinks it is beautiful (15). Upon her arrival in Lagos, Epifânia has memories of Brazil, of her encounters with Father José, the Bahian priest who, often loaded with cachaça, used to invite her up to his room 'to lie down with him, open her legs for him, smell the drink on his breath as he entered her'[6] (108). When she thinks of marriage for her adolescent child Mariana, Epifânia is fixated on copulation, as she compares the attitude of Brazilian and African men:

> She tried to decide what sort of man [Sebastian] would be like in sex ... perhaps here in Africa they weren't in such a hurry as they had been in Piau, there as soon as a girl began to grow hairs they grabbed her, the black girls anyway...(108)

Just as she enjoyed sex with Father José, Epifânia willingly submits her body to the unknown bald Negro in Rio.[7] On the ship returning to Africa, she feels the need for a man (56) and, years after, she enjoys memories of past bedmates. The obsession with sex is repeated over and over again with members of the family, from Mariana to her sister Emilia.

The consolatory aspect of this sex-mania comes in the second generation, on the continent. Mariana becomes mother of the family, begins the process of seeing and going beyond the body into the soul, thus transforming herself and others into full-fledged human beings. If Catarina and Epifânia represent that first symbol of physicality and superficiality, Mariana, Emilia and Antonio, Epifânia's children, constitute the second generation of socio-psychological profundity. One might, indeed, also submit that the definitions of family proffered by the novelist exceeds blood to include community of shared conditions and circumstances: among the returnees on the ship named Hope (*Esperança)* is established a deep-rooted, everlasting bond that makes them feel like family and, until the end of the story, we are made to trace their presence and disappearance, their contributions to their new home, and their common impact on the larger society.

A few examples will suffice here. Mariana first notices Fat Maria on the ship, sitting near her grandmother Catarina's bed (54). They immediately become close. In Lagos, Fat Maria becomes a member of the extended family, working as washerwoman, then as adviser to Mariana in her various businesses, until her death when the latter remembers their first meeting and the fat woman's didactic stories on life and culture (352). Dona Julia, another voyager on the same ship, is the mother of Abigail who, at age fifteen, is the object of a fight between two men on the ship (59). Later

in Lagos, Abigail gives birth to Ana, who becomes the wife of Joseph, Mariana's first son.

The Brazilian descendants that the new arrivals meet upon landing in Lagos become part of the family. Of particular importance is Dona Zezé, famous rich woman leader of the community around Bangboshe Street. Her abode, *Bahia House,* is the central point from which all activities emanate, and it is she who offers the Catarina family food and shelter, introduces them to people, gives them cola nuts and tobacco to sell, and gives them clothes to wear. Dona Zezé supplies the clothes for young Mariana who, according to her, 'arrived saluting the land' (74). She later lends Mariana the money to purchase her first property, and serves the emerging entrepreneur as anchor and accomplice, until her death (216). Another figure is Seu Gaspar Antonio Sales, an orisha priest that educates the family on the Lagosian brand of African and Afro-Brazilian culture and religion. In particular, he educates and assists Mariana in wading through the muddy and murky waters of social adaptation and communal survival, until his death (386).[8]

When Mariana grows up to become a responsible and rich matriarch, as we shall soon discuss, she moves across the Nigerian border to establish private and business estates in Dahomey and Zorei. She is followed by members of the Lagos family, and joined by new ones, such as Marie Vieira, house-help married to Jean da Cruz, engaged in copra trade (184); Silvanus, driver (267) and builder, married to an Ashanti wife (210); Adja, her Ewe assistant (191); Atondá, consultant (215); Pedoké, adviser.[9]

Of course, family is essentially defined through blood. Olinto's novel is a vast kaleidoscopic canvas of the evolution of three generations of Catarina's family in Africa. The glaring element of the evolutionary process is the presence of the man in the family. Both Catarina and Epifânia are concerned about marriage for the children. Mariana marries Sebastian Silva, son of a Brazilian returnee, and they have three children, Joseph, Ainá, and Sebastian. Her sister Emilia marries Ebenezer Okinoyi, son of an Ibadan chief; they have twins, Cosmé and Damião. The youngest sibling, Antônio, first marries an English woman he meets in London, Elizabeth, daughter of William Hill – after whom they name their only son, Bill. When Elizabeth dies upon her return to England after a sad, traumatizing spell in Lagos, Antônio travels to Bahia where he meets and weds the light-skinned mulatto, Esmeralda, with whom he has two children, Joaquim and Augusto.

As for the third generation, the trend continues. One easily traces the fortunes, and misfortunes of Mariana-Emilia-Antonio's children:

> *Mariana's lineage:* Joseph, after a period of uncertainty upon his return from England as a lawyer in the company of a man, Adolph Twelvetrees, a homosexual, he marries Ana with whom he has Mauricio and Alexandre. Aina, trained in London as a medical doctor, returns to Ibadan and marries Fagum Kayode, and they have a child, Adebayo. Sebastian returns from France as a French teacher, settles down in Zorei and marries an Ewe woman, Segui, who dies in child-birth, with child Mariana surviving.
>
> *Emilia's lineage:* the twin sons never get married, but rumour has it that the cocoa magnates have many children all over the land.
>
> *Antônio's lineage:* his first son, Bill, returns home from London with his grandfather, William Hill. Mariana witnesses the birth of the family's fourth generation: her grandson, Mauricio, marries an Ibo girl, Maud, and they have a child named Sebastian (397), the third to carry that name in the family.

The system of naming adopted by the novelist is impressive. It follows the pattern of African culture, with the cosmogony of generational reciprocity and replication, within the circle of life whereby the dead are reborn in their children and grandchildren as a matter of existential continuity. Such naming also connotes quality of the elder's character, as it is firmly believed that the newborn comes with the honour, honesty and hope represented by the eponym.

Thus, Sebastian, Mariana's husband, returns in the person of their son, Sebastian, followed by the fourth-generation Sebastian, son of Mauricio and Maud. Sebastian, Mariana's last child, names his baby-girl Mariana, in honor of his mother.

The most important name is that of Aina. It is grandmother Catarina's original name in Abeokuta, before she was sold off into slavery. Now, we note that, in spite of the overwhelming urge to return, and the subliminal sense of satisfaction at the fulfillment of the dream, Catarina is devastated to find that, when she visits Abeokuta, her family is totally extinct, and she is a stranger, indeed a foreigner, at home. Such dashed hope could easily lead to depression and despondency. Catarina's daughter, the ever doubting, Brazilophilic Epifânia, actually feels satisfied by that fact. She asserts:

> She is beginning to realize that nothing has changed, there isn't much difference between this place and Bahia, the only difference there is here is for the worse, there we belonged, here we are foreigners to the English and foreigners to the Africans ... (88)

On the other hand, Epifânia's daughter, Mariana, is more understanding of the old woman's condition. She believes that, notwithstanding the sadness of her family's extinction, things have changed, without her knowing exactly what and why. She and her mother are made to understand the change when Catarina, approaching her grave, declares:

> I don't want you to call me Catarina any more. That is not my name. I want you all to call me by my name... My name is Ainá... They shouldn't be allowed to change people's names... A name is a sacred thing, it shouldn't be spoken too much, it shouldn't be used carelessly, and only the family should know your name. For people outside the family a nickname would do. (88-89)

For the old woman who dies two days later, that is the fulfillment of a life-long dream. The supposedly simple act of nomenclature constitutes a change, a re-affirmation of identity, a re-birth, a symbolic return to roots.[10] Mariana agrees that Aina is 'a pretty name, nicer than Catarina' (89). When the old woman dies, Old Teresa urges Mariana to wash the body clean, as required by tradition, so that the dead may return as Mariana's child; and that is exactly what happens later in the person of Aina, the doctor blessed with a similar fortitude of character as her grandmother.

If the question of naming represents a genuine return to roots, other cultural representations make for argument as they tend to impose a Western perspective and bias; at least, one notes a certain confusion, or ambiguity in the discourse. As mentioned above, members of Mariana's thriving family are encouraged to marry. According to her, 'a man without a woman is no good' (256). As early as age sixteen, she herself is made aware of the necessity to take a husband. Her mother insists on her remaining a virgin, and her strength of character is underlined by the incident of a man trying unsuccessfully to rape her mother (105).[11] On the contrary, Mariana's sister, Emilia, is not impressed by the moral notion of virginity.

The controversy in Olinto's depiction of marriage is with regard to polygamy, presented as an African way of life, without fully contextualizing or explaining the institution. The first sign of it is seen in Bahia, before the return to Africa. Among the men in the marketplace is one with marks

on his face, who says that he has sixty-one children and about forty wives (he cannot remember exactly how many). Rumour has it that the man has offspring spread all over, in Lagos, Angola, Trinidad, Sweden, Salvador. Epifânia asks him whether he is not worried that his children might mistakenly marry one another!

In Africa, Epifânia resolutely opposes polygamy, and she is saddened by the fact that many Brazilian men there are taking wives. Meanwhile, Yoruba women see nothing wrong in polygamy; some also assert that women, too, can take more than one husband (98). Mariana notices that wives in polygamous homes exhibit no jealousy and, in many instances, women state that it is bad to be the only wife.

> The most important thing is to have children and to look after them. How can a woman look after a husband and a small child at the same time? It's not right. When there are a few wives it's different, the work is shared out. (160)

No matter; none of Mariana's family engages in polygamy.[12]

The choice of spouse could be considered as a deliberate attempt at cultural complementarity. While Mariana marries Sebastian, son of a returnee, her sister Emilia's husband is Ebenezer, son of a rich polygamist in Ibadan. Their sibling Antonio first marries an English woman; after her death, he takes a mulatto woman.

In Bahia Mariana's first son, Joseph, takes the daughter of a returnee; her daughter, Ainá, is betrothed to a local Yoruba, and her last son, the exceptional Sebastian, weds Segui, an Ewe girl whose mother is Yoruba. In each case, marriage is described as a process of interaction and integration between families, beyond the individuals. That underlines the African concept of the institution. Mariana is made aware of this by her mother, grandmother, and the extended family of elders. She continues the practice when she becomes mother of the family.

As stated above, the return to roots represents for Mariana's family an essential re-Africanization, subsumed in the rehabilitation of the male figure among the women from Piau. Nonetheless, by (re)presenting the imposing figure of Mariana, Olinto would appear to engage the reader in a discourse on gender *à l'occidentale*. On the other hand, we cannot forget that, in the real society of Lagos, and precisely among the Yoruba, women have always been at the centre of commerce. Market women are the foci of the economy, while men engage in politics. The particularity of Olinto's creation is that Mariana combines both activities: she is a tycoon, as well as

the respected and, indeed, feared, trusted ally of her last son, the politician Sebastian.

SINHÁ MARIANA AND SEU SEBASTIAN: MOTHER AND SON AS LEADERS[13]

From the beginning of the story, Olinto asserts that the central figure is the child, Mariana, and we follow her growth throughout the novel. Her arrival with her family at the port of Lagos is odd: due to the various illnesses suffered on the high seas, they are first quarantined for days and, when they are allowed ashore, it is without their clothes, but wrapped in sheets provided by the English authorities. As for Mariana, it is a particularly symbolic moment: her mother, Epifânia, notices that she has grown pubic hair and she undergoes her very first menstruation just as they are disembarking. This is what old Dona Zezé, the returnee who helps them on Bangboshe Street, calls 'saluting the land' (74). That salutation, like sacrifice to the deities of the land, and the old woman's statement, 'God bless her', stamp upon Mariana a special status. She has become not only a woman but also a symbol, a potential centripetal force towards which all the returnees would gravitate as they seek direction in their new homeland.

Another marker of Mariana's extraordinary qualities is her closeness to grandmother Catarina-Ainá. She is the latter's favourite, sitting by her, learning from her, imbibing essential aspects of a culture for which her mother, Epifânia, no longer cares. Interestingly, it is the mother who remarks that Mariana has turned out to be a replica of the grandmother (153). One can easily trace Mariana's development, from child to girl to adult; from single woman to wife to mother to widow, and single mother-become-family matriarch and communal icon. As a child, she 'was always asking questions' (23). That early curiosity is matched by a childish joy of living that makes her laugh all the time, so much so that her mother calls it 'the devil in her' (31), even though her grandmother understands it as a point in the growing process. Mariana stops her unbridled laughter when she hears the story of a man with special powers from the orishas[14] who, victim of another man's laugh, makes the latter pay. She learns the lesson: 'Never laugh at anyone again' (65). She becomes contemplative and observant, sitting close to her grandmother smiling, singing and smoking her pipe.

Mariana undergoes the double education of the classroom and the streets. She starts school during the protracted stopover in Bahia on the way back to Africa. In Lagos, before she enrolls at a school in Topo, she learns at the feet of her grandmother and other elders in the Brazilian quarter.

When the family experiences hard times, due to the global depression that stops the arrival of commercial vessels bringing tobacco, salted meat and cachaça from Brazil, Mariana has to leave school and begin to sell obi, orobo and cornmeal biscuits. Thus, she hones her entrepreneurial skills.

In Bahia, she begins to appreciate the sea, 'she lost herself in it, forgot everything' (61). In Lagos, the mystery continues; for, indeed, the sea symbolizes the link between Africa and Brazil, between past and present, continuity, all elements of a complex totality of questions without answers that Mariana represents. She transmutes into a woman of courage, fearing no one, learning and appreciating various languages, learning world politics and literature (for example, Castro Alves, Afro-Brazilian writer), and affirming and confirming her independence and leadership as the eldest child.

The high point of Mariana's psychological development, enhanced by that aura of mystery, is her decision to sink a well. She is almost twenty, mother of two children, with her husband, Sebastian, gone to Fernando Po after losing his job in Lagos. A friend comments on the problem of water, that the quarter is getting dirtier and dirtier. Mariana has little money, and she is saddled with familial duties. She has the idea floating in her head, as she has childhood memories of the Brazilian sugar plantation and the oxen and the cows, and *the well.* 'That was it. Lagos needed a well, Mariana would make one in the yard of the house, she would sell water instead of selling obis' (129).

She makes inquiries about digging a well, a completely unknown concept to one and all, including the English administration. Her mother even thinks she is mad. Work starts, slowly with the collaboration of Ricardo, a returnee experienced in the process. Finally, water is struck in March, close to the Feast of St. José, celebrated in style. Mariana, already shrewd in business, buys the house from the landlord. By Easter Sunday, everything is ready for the well's inauguration: a low wall has been built, like the one Mariana saw in Bahia. Antônio, Mariana's brother, makes a wooden cover to protect the well from falling objects. At the special lunch, everyone drinks water from the well. An *oriki* is chanted for water: 'O water which has sprung up for all of us may you always flow abundantly and bring happiness to the mistress of the well' (136). Neco, the painter, is asked to make a big notice: *omi agua water.*[15] The notice is fixed on Shango's special day, Wednesday. An oriki goes to Shango, too: 'O Shango may your day bring us good fortune in this undertaking, may your fire light up our water.' Mariana buys a ram which Seu Gaspar uses as sacrifice to Shango. For the first time, the old man addresses her as *Sinhá.*

Thus unfolds a long period of business success. From the well, Mariana expands her interests to furniture sales and rental, real estate, and export and import with Brazil.[16] She moves across the border to Dahomey (Ouidah) where she builds 'The Water House' that becomes the foundation of a fledgling, multinational village that some call *Aguá*. She builds sobrados in Lagos and Ouidah, and is among the first to buy a car. She buys a house and a shop in Aduni, capital of the colony of Zorei, and birth-place of her last son, Sebastian.

So, Mariana is rich, with 'enough money to last her for ever' (290), but without any pomposity. Hers is an idyllic blend of capitalism with communalism. She never forgets her humble upbringing, and the significance of the well as her salvation: 'I only began to be myself after I had made a well' (186). She is mother of all, as already mentioned earlier, giving direction to her siblings and children, taking on the mantle of head even during the lifetime of her husband, Sebastian. While observers are asking the question as to who is in charge between her and her husband, Mariana, ever practical and down-to-earth, is concerned with the essentials of living and survival.

The political success of son Sebastian marks the apogee of Mariana's life accomplishments. Born and educated in Zorei, the young man travels to France and returns as a trained teacher. His sojourn abroad, during the second world war years, gets him interested in colonial and international affairs. When he comes back to teach at the school where the Frenchman Armand Casteller taught him, Sebastian is a natural for political leadership. We witness his rise from teacher to national leader, the elected first President of the Republic of Zorei. Then tragedy strikes: Sebastian is assassinated in a coup (401).

Sebastian is a pan-africanist convinced that political independence is an absolute necessity after which the nascent nations should come together. A rare breed, he also affirms that 'independence is going to increase our problems; the date of independence is only the beginning of our fight for true independence' (384). He is supported by his mother who, indeed, is more than supporter; she is his anchor, his soul and source of strength. Witness Mariana's show of resolve and protest when her son is unjustly arrested during the electoral campaign. She spends three days sitting on the bench in front of the prison, insisting that her son be released. Others join her, and the colonial authorities are scared of the commitment of the community and the woman's leadership. When Segui, Sebastian's wife, dies, Mariana becomes First Lady of Zorei and, more than that, she constitutes a role model, an institution, a symbol of multi-nationalism and political progress.

The mother in her is never far from the surface. Just as she maintains a maternal preoccupation with all her children's and grandchildren's destinies,[17] sharing their pains and relishing their pleasures, she is ever watchful over Sebastian's presidential ambitions. She plans the education of every one of her siblings and children. While her siblings, pretty Emilia and worldly Antônio, do not get far in school, her three children, all trained abroad, turn out to be important, responsible citizens. Joseph is a London-trained lawyer, and Aina, a renowned medical doctor. Of course, Sebastian becomes president. While witnessing and participating in his political ascendancy, she constantly worries about his and his wife's need for children (360). When she visits post-independence Lagos as a kind of official ambassador of Zorei, she makes sure to seek the Nigerian government's assistance in locating the family of Maud, her grandson Mauricio's Ibo wife, caught behind the lines during the Biafran war (399).[18]

Mariana's qualities as matriarch attain international heights when a couple from Brazil comes all the way to Ouidah to interview her (396). The Brazilian public has read her story. People know that a 'son' of hers, Fadori, lives in Brasília. She is impressed that the man and woman are wearing scarlet and white – Shango's colours chosen by her (376) for Zorei's flag.

The relationship between Mariana and Fadori, viewed on the surface, might either diminish the aura surrounding Olinto's heroine, or remind the reader that she is but human. Son of Fatumbi, the awe-inspiring Ifa priest whom Mariana consults at each event in her family's life, Fadori is a teenager when the father asks her to take and raise him as her child (303). Mother and son gradually become an odd, complex couple in a vein that reminds her of old Yao and his adolescent wife, Abá: the young girl is there to keep the old man company, play with him, renew his vigour and keep him alive, all with the possibility that she may become his real wife in all aspects.

With Fadori always by her side, Mariana, even though aging, finds new reasons for living, finds everything so beautiful that she is afraid of drowning 'in the pleasure of simply being alive'.

> The link that bound her to Fadori was strong because he wasn't her son, if he had been her son it would have been different, it was so strong too because he wasn't her husband and didn't sleep with her, if he had slept with her he would have been like the others, but he was a son and he was a husband, he was near and he was far away… (322)

Indeed, Fadori, a budding artist blessed with a certain stillness that 'seemed like the stillness before some onslaught [even though] the repose is never broken' (337), enhances Mariana's subliminal grounding in nature. The two sit for hours on end staring at the sea and the sand, taking in the sounds of silence around them. With time, the boy becomes a man, and his stillness makes Mariana think of that 'of the statues of the orishas, Shango holding his axe, Yemoja placing her hand on children' (334). When Fadori leaves for France, and from there for Brazil where he settles, he takes with him an essential part of his 'mother', thus emphasizing the eternal link between Africa and Brazil. Their togetherness and separation complement Mariana's experience with her murdered husband, Sebastian, while at the same time underscoring the imminent triumph and demise of her son, President Sebastian.

Perhaps the most impressive, amazing and rather bizarre symbol of Mariana's position as eternal mother is the son's act *on every occasion*: On the day he returns home from abroad, Sebastian 'threw himself full length on the ground and touched it three times with his head, then got up smiling.' His explanation to his mother befuddled by the action: 'That's the right way for a son to greet his mother. It's an old African custom and it shouldn't be forgotten' (296). Every time he does so, those around look on in wonderment. Would it be the novelist's way of promoting, or ridiculing, African culture? It is noteworthy that the same Sebastian that resolutely goes on all fours to greet his mother, refuses to wear African dress. His statement:

> It would be demagogy on my part. I am of Brazilian stock and the Brazilians have always worn trousers and jacket... If I had ever worn that sort of clothing in the past I would be quite ready to wear it again now. But to wear it simply for the sake of political advantage seems to me to be pure demagogy.

The vast majority accepts his decision, but his mother takes a moderate position:

> I think you could wear Yoruba robes. After all, we are Yoruba, me, your father, your grandparents, and the Yoruba dress is very handsome. But if you really don't want to, then don't, just dress as you always have. (371)

Here is the usual Mariana, compromising, seeking the middle road, and finding some formula to reach and maintain peace and to emphasize the positive in everyone. When her son is brutally murdered by rebellious soldiers in the presidential palace, we see her at her resilient best. Just as she did at her husband's death, she refuses to cry. She travels alone in the car with her driver from Ouidah to the Aduni palace, still occupied by the dissidents, takes delivery of the corpse and has it buried at the spot where her mother, Epifânia, lies. The people's 'great chief, mother of the great chief' (345), again stands tall as revered leader of the community bringing together Africans and Afro-Brazilians.

That togetherness is rooted in many expressive forms in the novel, one of the most alluring being Olinto's use of *orikis*. According to the Yoruba scholar, Oluropo Sekoni:

> Oriki, literally *kiki ori*, means reciting poetry for the head. But Oriki is basically the poetry of identity. It allows the poet to link the individual to his community, lineage, and clan, mostly in the form of panegyrics, or praise. Oriki is done for the individual and also for the community or the family; in each case the objective is to celebrate the identity of the subject of the poem.[19]

Oriki could easily become shallow praise-singing. It brings to mind the art of the griot who, in the context of a neo-colony, often transmutes into a material-minded liar pandering to the wishes of his corrupt master and mentor. Olinto does not fall into that demeaning category. He maintains a lyrical tone that uplifts the character of his subjects. In his zeal to espouse the poetic Africanity, he extends the subjects of praise beyond the human, to include everything and every idea conceivable (orikis to the Holy Ghost, Santa Ana, Palm Sunday, water, well, house, night, memory, palm oil, child, road, tree, the festival bumba-meu-boi/burrinha, shout, the dead, orishas Shango and Oshun). By extension, Olinto's orikis become prayers, expressing the hopes of the observer for the subject, and a desire to 'concretize' dreams. Orikis are first heard in the Bahia homes, 'especially in the houses of people who had been born in Africa' (114). After crossing the Atlantic back to Africa, Mariana immerses herself in the habit; 'she thought in orikis... she imagined orikis all the time' (115); she prayed in orikis, composed them for children and animals, and her thoughts, in Yoruba and Portuguese. The narrator, her alter ego to a certain extent, does likewise. The most eloquent, stirring orikis go to the assassinated President Sebastian. In the words of Atondá, Mariana's Yoruba employee:

> O powerful chief, who has abandoned us, who has left us in solitude, you who were master of all the virtues, who were faithful to women and to children, to men and to the gods, may you return to this world with greater power … (404)

And Mariana, with her son's body on her lap: 'O dead one who died when I was not there, who died from violence like your father died, O dead one who was not meant to die…' (*Ibid.*) Those invocations are to be considered in correlation with Atondá's oriki to the living Sebastian at his presidential inauguration: '*May Shango give you the instrument of justice* and may all you lay your hand to be successful, may your wisdom always lead you along the right path.' (374, emphasis mine)

AFRICA AND AFRO-BRAZIL: CULTURAL CONVERGENCES, DIVERGENCES, CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES

The use of orikis on both sides of the Atlantic is a cultural marker indicating the convergences and continuities between the continent and the Diaspora. So also is the reference to the orishas, Shango, Oshun, Yemaja, Eshu, and others. At the same time, there are cultural conflicts and divergences subsumed in issues of nationality and identity.[20] Olinto's novel gives room for an in-depth, intriguing discourse with the decisive opinion being that of Mariana.

We recall that Catarina, the grandmother whose desire to return to Africa is at the root of the whole drama, considers herself African from the very beginning to the end. By contrast her daughter Epifânia resents the idea of return and, although she makes the trip and dies in Ouidah, she is forever nostalgic about Brazil. She tells Mariana: 'I'm here in Lagos, daughter, but I only need to close my eyes and I feel as if I'm back in Piau … Other times, it's as if it were Bahia' (103). Mariana stands in stark contrast:

> She didn't want to be like her mother, living here but with her thoughts somewhere else, *she noticed the fights between the Brazilians and the people of the land, said that she thought they ought to stop, there was one aristocracy of people who had come to Lagos in this or that ship, and another of people who had lived there for a long time, Seu Alexandre had not let his daughter marry a Yoruba from Oshogbo, Mariana began to visit African houses more often, she became friendly with several Ibo families, the Ibos were Catholics as well, she had to speak English to them, she got into the way of*

> *discussing the problems of life in Lagos with Yorubas, it was better with them, she spoke in Yoruba* ... (104, emphasis is mine)

Mariana's conciliatory mien, her willingness to seek mutual understanding, her tolerance and desire to learn and to integrate; these attributes naturally help her become leader of the community. Other characters lack such qualities. As she witnesses cultural events in Lagos, she aligns them with what she used to see back in Brazil: the egungun festival to which her grandmother took her in Itaparica; Shango festival, with the songs, dance, statues, colour red, ram and cocks used for sacrifice, the drums giving one a feeling first of ecstasy and then of peace and contentment just to be there, and the woman mounted by the deity, with the shouts of praise, *Kauô-kabieci* (47). The Feast of Our Lady of Joy, held in the Brazilian quarter of Lagos, takes her back to Bahia, although the Lagos event is sometimes marked by fights between Brazilian descendants and the local population.

On such occasions, issues of nationality and identity rear their ugly heads. Among returnees, there is argument as to whether they are Africans or Brazilians. Here is a conversation between Epifânia and Old Teresa, during a tumultuous festival of bumba-meu-boi. The latter calls the locals Africans. Epifânia asks:

> 'Why do you call them Africans?'
> 'Because they are Africans.'
> 'Then what are we?'
> 'We are Brazilians. You have just arrived and you don't know what things are like here. We are civilized people, different from these others. It was us who taught the people joinery, we taught them how to build big houses, and churches, we brought cassava, cashews, cocoa, dried meat, coconuts. They stare at you with big round eyes and don't know how to enjoy themselves. The only thing they know how to do is to cause trouble at our parties.' (77)

Old Teresa's resentful statement and intolerant attitude reeks of a superiority complex which, paradoxically, hides its opposite; an inferiority complex attendant to the condition and experience of slavery. Unfortunately, the novel does not offer an in-depth description, or analysis, of characters from the local population. They remain on the periphery, mostly observers to the Afro-Brazilian drama of settling down and survival. Given the sketchy representation, one would say that Old Teresa's remarks are

overboard and outrageous. Of significance is Mariana's attitude and action. It is interesting, too, that her mother does not agree with Old Teresa, in spite of her refusal to accept the return.

As a growing little girl at Lagos, Mariana, always curious and already willing to adapt, accompanies her grandmother to cultural and religious festivals where sacrifices are made to the orishas, which Epifânia refuses to attend 'because it's different from Bahia. Here if you're a Catholic, you stay a Catholic.' So, while the mother stays ambiguous, the daughter evolves towards a state of cultural complementarity. She once asks the mother: 'Are we Brazilians or Africans?' The answer: 'We are both, my child' (86). In the final analysis, for Mariana, that question would become irrelevant, the logic being that since one has settled in Africa, one belongs, or should strive to belong.

There are the two examples of foreigners in Zorei: one Arab, the Lebanese Seu Haddad, who has memories of home, but is happy to live where he is; and the French teacher Casteller, tired of travelling and never going home. Since such foreigners, with no African ancestry, have settled into the local community, the idea would be that Afro-Brazilians should have no problem. That is Mariana's viewpoint.

In a chat with Seu Haddad after she has been back in Africa for forty years, Mariana, we are told:

> felt African now, liked the feeling of change, the going from one place to another, having one house in Dahomey and another in Nigeria... she never managed to think in any other language but Portuguese, but she enjoyed talking in English and in French, in Yoruba and Ewe, even in German ... (279)

Her trans-border business encourages her adaptability. Her family relationships concretize the cultural depth and spread. Her religious grounding helps her to appreciate African people and culture. Contrary to her mother's belief in the separation of Catholicism and Ifa, Mariana insists on not just merging the two (the legendary notion of syncretism), but giving prominence to the latter, not as superior or better, but as viable faith and ritual. She imbibes the lessons taught by Catarina-Ainá, establishing in her homes the shrine for Shango, and her sister Emilia does the same. She celebrates all the festivals, those of Bahia, as well as those of Africa, indicating that 'one festival grew out of another, the Shangos were one' (291). By sheer constancy in the celebrations, she makes a subtle statement on equality and viability, without any preferences of prejudice. A bumba-

meu-boi, with the *calungas* (masks) of ox, ostrich, donkey, and woman giant, attracts a crowd of Yorubas, Itsekiris, Ibos, and returnees, with Mariana sitting there with pride, her Yoruba *gele* wrapped round her head (153). A Bonfim festival, with cachaça and food aplenty for a mirthful multitude of merrymakers blind to meaningless ethnic and cultural distinctions (133), gives Mariana the opportunity to express her joy for family unity, as she has made for them all dresses from the same material (Yoruba *aso ebi*). The naming ceremony of her son Sebastian affords the occasion to practice Yoruba culture, with the essential ingredients of water, salt, honey, and palm-oil given to the new-born baby to welcome him into a life filled with joy and success, of peace and prosperity (176).

Mariana cultivates a variety of cultural habits (some already known in Bahia) as a mark of her Africanness: use of the body-cream, *ori*, for a smooth, shiny skin; she eats with her fingers; she straps her child on her back; she uses Yoruba language to greet people. Olinto's treatment of the language issue makes for a broad examination of the cultural nuances from a perspective of those appreciating history and the benefits of being a polyglot. It all begins from one's identity: an Epifânia, desperately attached to Brazilian, would never countenance linguistic change, whereas a Mariana, supportive of change and interested in interacting with various ethnicities, would welcome the opportunity to learn languages. Besides, history and heritage play an important role in the evolution and destiny of languages. The English colonial government decides that all business in Lagos must be done in English; therefore, everyone, young and old, is compelled to learn English. While some complain, Mariana agrees: 'They are right, really. They are in control, they impose their language on us. That's only right' (157). Her compromising position and readiness to comply could be criticized as collaboration with the colonizer, but the consolation is that she also supports the teaching and learning of Portuguese, Yoruba, French and, indeed, German.

Those who lament the gradual extinction of Portuguese are the older generation that arrived on the *Esperança*.

> The old Brazilians were always seeking each other out, wanting to talk to each other, prove to themselves that they still lived in their own world, *a lot of the ones who had made money had sent their children to England, they would come back more English than Nigerian, and not at all Brazilian, it was a good thing really because everything had changed, the young people needed to live in new surroundings*. (223, my emphasis)

So, between old and new, there is visible change, welcomed by the narrator, and Mariana. She recognizes the fact that Portuguese is not the only language and that, as the old generation continues to diminish in number through death, hardly anybody speaks the language. Mariana, the quintessential supporter of change and renewal, keeps thriving. She is among the returnees sending their children to England, as remarked earlier. One is struck by the narrator's comment above, without any attempt to analyze the heroine's policy in that context. On the whole, her children appear not to have been negatively influenced by their education in England and France. The one with the highest status, President Sebastian, is a pan-Africanist, even if there is reason to question his notions of culture. An indubitable example of residual colonial mentality would be his, and his sister Ainá's, statement that independent Nigeria does not need medical doctors, only auxiliaries (319).

With their French and English pedigree, Mariana's children and grandchildren belong to the new bourgeoisie destined to lead, as does Sebastian. Would that be an affirmation of progress? It seems to be seen as such by Mariana: 'When you leave a place like we left Brazil, you never go back' (155). Here, in a rare moment of perspicacity, is inferred commentary on the symbolic ascendancy of the ex-slave from the Diaspora back to the continent. Even those who do not have money to send their children to Europe have reason to feel fulfilled by the return.

Mariana continues to appreciate change and continuity, playing down the divergences and finding room for harmony. In the matter of religion, she has no shame in accepting the orishas, but she does not condemn the Catholic religion. Her son, the president, keeps like a treasure the wooden sculpture of a bird on a man's head that she buys on the day she is told by the Ifa priest, Fatumbi, that her son will be somebody, 'but his life will be a hard one' (211). It serves as the Holy Ghost, and as Shango. When she consults a Catholic about the son, she is told the same thing. For each one of her family members, she always asks Fatumbi to divine, and his prognosis is always correct.

An example of Mariana's religious tolerance is her attitude towards Ebenezer Okinoyi, her sister Emilia's Christian fundamentalist husband, who abandons her and their twin children to go preaching on the streets of Ibadan and Lagos. Ebenezer dies destitute and homeless. When he sees Mariana before his death, he curses her, 'Woe unto you who hoard up wealth ...' (187). Yet, the Shango priest, Seu Gaspar, declares, 'Ebenezer is a very religious man ... He deserves respect' (188). Mariana avers, 'We must pray for Ebenezer because he never harmed anyone, only himself'

(274). The failed marriage between the Anglican Ebenezer and the Shango worshiper Emilia, would be subject of controversy in certain circles, but its effects are downplayed in Olinto's fictional space. That could be interpreted as a message of hope, that religious differences should not be a deterrent, and that tolerance should be the watchword.

If tolerance is advisable, change is inevitable. For the first time in her life, Mariana is absent from a family wedding, that of her grandson Mauricio, held in Enugu. But change is also adaptable: the couple will live in the sobrado on Bangboshe Street, the family's first home in Nigeria. While sobrados remain the vogue, Joseph, Mariana's eldest son, builds a skyscraper (*ilê-gogorô*) at the site of the first shop in the Brazilian quarter. The tragic change, the most traumatic, is the passing of son Sebastian, assassinated by rebellious soldiers. Yet there is a constant, in the person of Mariana, as firmly rooted as the baobab tree on the road to Zorei's presidential palace. Nearly fifty years after her return, aged sixty, Mariana declares her belonging to Africa: 'Mariana felt bound to this earth, she had been in Africa long enough to know that it had formed her ideas and imprinted itself on her life, she had become African before all else, she belonged to Lagos and the Water House [in Ouidah] and Aduni' (341).

CONCLUSION: WOMAN IS THE FUTURE OF MAN[21]

One can only suggest why Antonio Olinto chose to make a woman the heroine of this long, winding tale of return. Given the fact of his contemporaneousness with the Bahian novelist, Jorge Amado, one sees a similarity of theme and style: Amado is the modernist forever focused or, indeed, fixated on the *mulatta*, who, in principle, he describes and uses as a weapon to defeat a myriad of feudal lords. Simultaneously, however, Amado's constant focus on the female body calls to question the genuineness of his crusade. In *Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon* (a novel mentioned in Olinto's text: a copy of it is presented to Mariana by the visiting couple from Minas Gerais, 396), *Jubiaba*, *Dona Flor e Seus Dois Maridos*, among others, there is a constant parade of luscious mulatto women, their big breasts and buttocks announcing their willing promiscuity. They are there to satisfy the men, even if the latter stand to lose their power. Of course, it is a matter for argument, whether the end should justify the means, or the other way round.

Such Olintan proclivity for physical exploitation of the female body has been mentioned in this paper – Catarina, Epifânia, and Mariana, three generations of Afro-Brazilian women, are all presented as sex-maniacs unable to hide their need when the heat engulfs their bodies. Mariana

sleeps with her son's French teacher, Casteller, and she and her sister Emilia have affairs with the same man, Fatumde, brother of Mariana's Ifa priest, Fatumbi. Olinto uses many pages to describe Mariana's attainment of puberty, with details of the pubic hair. He shows her witnessing at age ten a sexual encounter in Rio. Are all those to be expected in modernism? Olinto, like Amado, is deemed progressive, and even leftist. He is Afro-Brazilianist, an interested observer with an appreciative eye for Afro culture, and a passion for Bahia's centrality in it. But neither he nor Amado is Afro-Brazilian. One would place in counterpoint the work of Abdias do Nascimento, Afro-Brazilian pan-Africanist.[22] While the Afro-Brazilian goes deep into the soul of his characters, the Brazilianist stays on the surface, obsessed with the erotica of the skin.

Another possible reason for Olinto's choice of the female as centre of attraction would be the fact, as witnessed in Bahia where Afro women play a major role (in the Candomblé houses and public and private enterprises), while men are often marginalized.[23] For our purpose, a most viable reason would be the objective to promote the female cause which, in the African context, would be an affirmation of an existing fact. Mariana comes in the mould of Yoruba market women leaders, and others engaged in socio-political struggle. Examples of the nineteenth and twentieth century protests against the English colonial administration in protectorate Lagos are Madam Tinubu, Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti of Abeokuta and her famous organization of market women against special taxation; and her contemporary, Adunni Oluwole, rebellious president of Egbe Alaga and candidate against the famous Obafemi Awolowo for the premiership of Western Nigeria.

Mariana, in spite of her shortcomings, impresses the reader as a force of African and Afro-Brazilian complementarity, of the continuity of a people and a culture, and of political progress. Her readiness to compromise is certainly not a failing; indeed, it is a quality of cultural awareness immersed in the knowledge that Africa and the Diaspora cannot be viable, cannot survive, if the emphasis is on divergences. The language issue is one on which there are divergent views. Mariana's stance is superior to that of her fellow returnees obsessed with Portuguese, but it is short of a really progressive position, such as proffered by a very old Yoruba: 'English is a foreign language. Portuguese is a foreign language. What we ought to speak is Yoruba.' (157)

The question is: how would such a nationalist ideal be 'concretized'? To her credit, Mariana serves as galvanizing force, and more. Her larger-than-life figure is food for thought in a history and a heritage marked by conflicts and

controversies, and by seeds of cultural disintegration sown by self-declared masters of civilization urging their slaves to save themselves from their atavistic savagery.[24] As she sits by the window 'looking endlessly at the sea and the sand' (337) of the Atlantic, old Mariana must be proud of her family's resilience, survival and spread across the lands of Africa, Europe, and also back in Brazil. The Yoruba say *Omi l'enia, to ba sanwa a tun san pada*: Human beings are like the waters of the sea; they go back and forth, incessantly. Back and forth they go, like memories of the past making us reflect and better understand the present, in readiness for the future. Seated there, Mariana ponders the lives of all returnees and those they had found on the land. Questions well up in her aplenty: Can stones grow (159)? How is it that things happen (165)? How could one know whether a person had enemies or not (340)? Who knows when the last time comes (4)? Who has any power over what happens (151)? To the questions are added statements, not answers: Happy as the water in a fountain (363). The cloth of life is woven with strange threads (315). Everybody is born naked (141). Death by dying means a party. Death by killing means tears (148).

Mariana's husband and son are both murdered. Such heavy blows would drown the strongest of humans. They would lead to a denunciation of a destiny in a land that one could repudiate in order to return to a Diaspora described by many as paradise. On the contrary, Mariana remains resolute. Ousmane Sembène, Senegalese filmmaker-writer, considers woman as the future of man.

Here is such a woman: strong, committed, symbolizing the bridge between cultural and racial poles, not perfect, but endowed with a character worthy of emulation, and refusing to surrender to the forces of death. We see her still sitting there, uttering that final cry, shrill, cutting across the sea, back to the land, expressing Africa's and Bahia's pain and joy, like the birth of a baby and the death of a man:

> O cry that came across the sand to the Water House, that made the people who heard it shiver… O cry that came from Piau, from Bahia … from the blood of the child who was turning into a woman … O cry, old woman's cry and child's cry …

Thus, Mariana survives her husband and son, and stands in the cemetery hand in hand with her granddaughter, little Mariana, predicted by the Ifa priest to become 'by the end of the century the most powerful woman in West Africa' (406).

ENDNOTES

1. See Wikipedia. Antonio Olinto is the author of many books of fiction and poetry, and essays. Another novel of his on Africa is *O Rei de Keto.* (1980) Ile Axé Opô Afonjá is one of the oldest Afro religious houses in Bahia. Reference is specifically made to the Ile (house) in the novel (245): Antonio, brother to the main protagonist, Mariana, returns to Bahia to sell religious items, such as obi, orobo, and ekudide. Afonja members are his best customers, and he is very close to the yalorisha of the house, Dona Aninha, and her spiritual daughter, Senhorazinha.

   The title given to the two writers is rather confusing, one of those anomalies of transferred culture from continent to Diaspora. An Oba (roughly translated as king) is head of community; so, Oba of Shango would appear to connote headship, but that is inconceivable in terms of an orisha, a deity, which Shango is. One is aware of an elitist culture within the ranks of the Candomblé community, where whites and mulattoes, often well-healed, too, are given positions of distinction. The honor here is due, not to the writers' religious adeptness or devotion, but to their distinguished social class, one more example of politics in religion.
2. Olinto, *The Water House*: 1. Henceforth, references to this book will be made only with the page numbers.
3. Reference to this event is cursorily made on a few occasions in the novel. It is noteworthy that Olinto does not explore, or explain, or expatiate on the 'fact.' The matter-of-fact attitude reminds one of the Eurocentric perception on slavery and the Trade: Africans sold their kin to European trading 'partners.' If there were no sellers, there would be no buyers, and the tragic traffic would never have occurred.
4. See p. 17. The writing style of the whole novel is rather odd. The syntax is strange, with sentences hardly delineated by the traditional full stop. Statements run on without punctuation, and commas are the rule, not full stops. One is not certain whether this is a derivate of the original Portuguese text, *A Casa de Agua,* or whether it is the style deliberately chosen by the translator, Dorothy Heapy. The rather strange style of this English edition lends a dream-like effect to the narration. The story seems to flow and float along like the peaceful waters of the sea, replicating the mind of the mirthful and mediating persona of Mariana, determined to live life on an even keel, and to cultivate peace and harmony by all means. The one exception to the rule in this abnormal style is the political speech of her son, Sebastian (384-5).

5. Note the widespread opinion that the master-slave interaction in Brazil was more cordial than in most other sites. It is a prelude to the later theory and propaganda of racial democracy.
6. See p. 108. The Bahian affair between Father José and Epifânia makes for an interesting study of the theme of love and sex in the novel. Epifânia constantly expresses 'serene enjoyment', sympathy and empathy for the drunken priest, even as women gossip that she is his mistress. She introduces her little girl Mariana to him, and the two like each other. Daughter and mother never forget the priest for whom they feel pity, and they both are convinced that he is a good man. This generous character will be discussed in the case of Mariana. The questions: what is love? Why does Olinto present characters so ready to accept lewd behavior as common human frailty? Would such behaviour be acceptable in so-called mainstream society? Note the reference to 'black girls' (108).
7. See p. 15: 'Epifânia was in a strange room with a bald Negro, the first she had ever seen, he undressed her, it was so long since she had had a man that she found it strange, she couldn't wait for his penis to go in, it was enormous, seemed to go through her until she felt she had to shout out... she gave herself over to the movement with a delight and an ease which she had never known before.' Note also that Catarina, as slave, willingly gives herself to her master's son (13); that would be one more example of the cordial relationship between slave and master: no question of rape there, the black woman, promiscuous almost to the point of nymphomania, is ready and able, looking forward to the man's arrival. Naturally, the planter's son comes back often; for Catarina, it has become a habit!
8. Other characters in the extended family of Brazilian descendants: Suliman, Catarina's friend who becomes shopkeeper and employee of Mariana's; Jerônimo, Epifânia's lover; Seu Alexandre and Seu João de Sousa, elderly neighbours; Alberto, carpenter, helping to construct Mariana's *sobrados* (Brazilian-style two-story buildings) in Lagos and Ouidah; Dona Filomena, the best midwife in Brazilian quarter of Lagos, who delivers Mariana of her first baby; Papai Aguda and Seu Machado, old men, constant presence at cultural celebrations where they sing and tell stories of the past; Seu Neco, painter; Ricardo, expert in bore-holes and builder of Mariana's well and *sobrados*.

   The novel traces the lives and deaths of the characters, considered an integral part of Mariana's family.
9. The majority of these characters surrounding Mariana's family are of Afro-Brazilian descent. The presence of others from local ethnicities is also of import. Nonetheless, as we shall discuss later, the emphasis on the former

does constitute a point of interest, in terms of cultural and national identities, as well as conflicts and convergences.

10. Loss of identity through name-change is one of the essential aspects of the depersonalization of slavery. For example, Aimé Césaire, Martinican poet-politician and father of Negritude, attests to this dehumanizing process: Kesteloot et Kotchy, *Aimé Césaire, l'homme et l'oeuvre,* Présence Africaine, 1973: 223.
See also, Ojo-Ade, ed., *Of Dreams Deferred, Dead, or Alive*, Three Continents Press, 1984, the final chapter on African American names.
11. Again, we note that, in Brazil, sexual encounters are not described in terms of rape.
12. As with many other differences between Brazilian and African ethos, Mariana tries to strike a balance. The meaning of her willingness and attempt to compromise will be discussed later.
13. *Sinhá* is used by Afro-Brazilians as substitute for *senhora* to designate an important lady. For men, *seu* replaces *senhor.*
14. We shall discuss later Mariana's attachment to the traditional religion.
15. The signpost combines three languages: Yoruba, Portuguese and English. The language issue will be discussed later.
16. Her shrewdness is underscored by the fact that she is aware of the need for change and diversity: the English authorities first accuse her of illegal sale of water, which she denies; and, by the time they decide to sink public wells, she has already left the business. Not only is she an astute businesswoman, but also a kind-hearted human being: she secretly gives free water to those who cannot afford to pay. She is respected by everyone, and is always the centre of attention and attraction.
17. While being educated abroad, each of the children regularly sends her letters to report their progress, to seek her advice, and to receive her blessings (214ff, 217ff, 225ff).
18. As already indicated, the novel's plot is interwoven into the real West African colonial and post-colonial history within the context of the Second World War and its aftermath until the mid-1960s, the period of the Nigerian civil war.
19. Correspondence between the two critics, October 2008.
20. These themes are dealt with in real-life situations, in papers in this collection.
21. Phrase borrowed from the late Senegalese filmmaker and novelist, Ousmane Sembène. See Ray Pride, 'Woman is the Future of Man: Ousmane Sembène on *Moolade*,' *Cinemascope,* www.cine-scope.com

22. This brings to mind the work of Cuban *negristas*, such as Alejo Carpentier, and their Afro-Cuban compatriots, such as Nicolás Guillén.
Jean-Paul Sartre called Amados' *Gabriela* 'the best example of a folk novel'.
It would also be worthwhile to take a close look at the books read by the characters of Olinto's novel. The list includes:
History of France (321); *The Guarani* (102, story of the difficult love-affair between a Brazilian Indian and a white girl), *The Betrothed* (325), and *The Little Dark-Skinned Girl* (103).
23. This is one of the consequences of slavery.
24. One such 'civilization'-driven bone of contention is the complex relationship between continental and diasporic Africans.
See for example Godfrey Mwakikagile, *Relations between Africans, African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans*, Dar es Salaam, New Africa Press, 2007.
This critic has also addressed the subject: see Ojo-Ade, *Being Black, Being Human*, Trenton, Africa World Press, 2004.

15

AFRICANS IN BRAZIL, BRAZILIANS IN AFRICA[1]

ANA ALIKIJA

I would like to avoid the term *returnees*[2] – may the history be repaired. It was the *migrants, the banned ones, the expatriates, the agudas*[3] of the first, second and third generation who had the bravery to cross the Atlantic returning for the first time in unsafe boats during the nineteenth century, in an attempt to reach their '*Canan*'. They were fed by the dream to recover their roots, to re-encounter their families, as they were born on the African continent or were descendants of the continent. Victims of ambushes, kidnaps, chaining, deportation, imprisonment, exploration, slave work, ill-treatment, rape, homicide, they are the main characters of one of the most hateful crimes against humanity – that of human captivity. Heroes and heroines, these African descendants are the survivors of one of the major[4] inter-continental displacements of our history. Despite this history, Africans in Brazil, Brazilians in Africa, have recovered and recreated their existence, accepting a new condition in their new nations. Many kept their links with the Brazilian nation on their return to the African continent. They became *immigrants*. A great majority of those who went as slaves remained in Brazil – they became *diasporeans*.[5]

I also call on my ancestors to grant me permission to present these memories in written form, breaking the oral tradition of African societies. I believe I have inherited from my father, who inherited from my grandfather, who inherited from his fathers and who probably inherited from their mothers, the mission to pass on these memories. Thus, since 1997 I have endeavored to do so and have had the opportunity to meet Professor Ojo-Ade. We had known each other some years before, as I was the editor of the Afro-Brazilian newspaper during the time when I interviewed Professor Wande Abimbola, the then Rector of the Ile-Ife University, on one of his trips to Bahia. Professor Ojo-Ade was accompanying him. Thankfully, through the representative of the local Nigerian community, who later became the leader of the House of Nigeria in Bahia, Mr. Misbah

Akanni (whom I thank for the Yoruba[6] language editing) we had dinner with the Minister-Ambassador in Brazil, his Excellence Katumba Aboki. In that encounter of Yoruba brotherhood in which my father, the psychiatric physician Dr. George Alakija – patriarch of the third generation of the clan of the Alakija in Brazil – took part, we discussed an initial seed-support group of a project that came to be known as the Alakija Memorial Project, paying homage to my family.[7] Our family can be regarded as a representation of the continuing process of the African clan families in Brazil and their Brazilian segments in Africa. We also have the responsibility of collecting information about African descendents with roots in Nigeria. Our role is both important and meaningful for the redemption and cultivation of the memories of the lineage of Afro-Brazilian families.

The recovery and consequent preservation of these memories is important for a number of reasons. I will mention those that I consider as the most important ones for the development of our ideas. Firstly, in the hope to free themselves from the responsibility of compensating the slaves after the abolition of the slavery in Brazil, the colonial government ordered that all pieces of paper, registration books and slavery-related documents be destroyed (Barbosa 1987; 1), in order to erase most of the proof of the slavery regime that lasted for about four centuries, killing millions of Afro-Brazilians. Secondly, it is necessary to recognise the death of numerous African clans, of many families, of loved ones, of friends and members of social groups living within the African Kingdom. The slavery system reached the nucleus of the cells of sociability of the African societies (Ziegler 1972; 19-20). Thirdly, the dismantling of the physical, emotional and social links had devastating effects on the identities of those people. The reconstruction of the identities of their families and of their social groupings, is fundamental. To reconstruct oneself as an individual and social being, in relation to the reality of one's body and of one's ethnic history, is a process of becoming *negro*. Furthermore, 'becoming *negro* is to engage oneself in the redemption of one's history and recreate oneself in one's potentialities' (Souza 1983; 18).

The Alakija Memorial Project foresees the organization of a collection of work, by gathering, treating, recovering and making available documents in the form of archives for research on Brazilian families with African roots. From this archive, it is also intended to generate the production of other media such as books, publications, documentary film and graphic material. The final products of this work will be made available for cultural, educational, scientific purposes to other institutions who are engaged in the development of the African people and their culture in Brazil and in the world.

This paper contains theoretical references prepared through the years using human and financial resources that have been at times quite personal. From pictures dating back to the nineteenth century, publications (books, newspapers, both Brazilian and foreign magazines and other printed material), personal documents, transcriptions, other objects collected (authorized and donated by some families) to already existing memorials. These references have provided meanings to the oral stories, which I have decided to organize. Another main characteristic of the project is that it allows the actors themselves to produce a different version of history according to their reflections and personal account.

Previous surveys show that there are a great number of families who have returned from Brazil and have long since settled in Lagos, Nigeria, as illustrated by names like Silva, Santos, Sousa, Santana, Pereira, Mendes, Costas, Pacheco, and Ramos, to name a few. These families established themselves there and met their African relatives and cultivated their memoirs from the times they lived in Brazil (Olinto 1980; 143-313). In undertaking an aspect of archeological work, three observations can be inferred:

1) There have been and there are still people, especially in Nigeria and in Brazil (more specifically in Bahia) who are part of a personified heritage of both the Brazilian and African nations, who are responsible for the oral transmission of memories. They contribute directly or indirectly to the continuation of a legacy and allow for a magnification of the history of these two countries.

2) The legacy exposes the existence of remnants belonging to a cast of political and also religious royalty of the old Yoruba kingdoms in Nigeria, whose descendents were victimized and sold as war prisoners because of the holy and ethnic wars that took place on the west coast (Verger 1987; 10. Costa and Silva, 1994). This insight adds a different dimension to this history if we consider that the official historiography diffuses the roots of an Afro-Brazilian population linked to the slavery system and to the consequent servitude of their past.

3) There is a necessity to keep that memory alive. In so doing, more visibility of the remnants of their history are made available. Mainly because the full history of those who

> remained in Brazil, was not incorporated into the official historiography, which rather, was weighted with the vestiges of the ideology of European supremacy and their culture of dominance. Furthermore, Brazilian contemporary society in general resists acknowledging this history. Additionally, where there is interest shown, the preservation, and requisite importance owed, is not given. Consequently, the current generations are being cut off from the knowledge of other pasts that remained in Africa and of what is still alive as a symbol of resistance to the destruction of a history.

The preservation of the memory of these Afro-Brazilians as immaterial heritage appears to be a way to deepen and give continuity to the links originally established between Africa and America, which are currently being fed by bilateral relationships. Many possibilities will come from strengthening these links. The result of redemption, recuperation, preservation and dissemination of these memories can, for instance, greatly contribute to both the dialogue and the reconstruction of dialogue among the descendants of Africans within the diaspora and Africans living within Africa. Such dialogue could help create mutual understandings in relation to their adjustment in modern and multicultural societies. Both are victims of Eurocentrist and ethnocentrist thoughts congruent with theorists like Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau, who believed in an ideology that heralded European supremacy above all and whose cultural codes have been printed in their minds since the nineteenth century (Fanon; 17-35; 71-89). The repossession of their history could also salvage lost roots and eventually these histories may gain respect through the affirmation of their cultural distinctiveness. Those who lived under colonial rule would then be able to adjust themselves without refusing or rejecting the values of their own civilization.

In this particular case, Brazil has a lot to learn and also has a lot to contribute. Interestingly, it was within the Brazilian nation that many African cultural groupings became 'brothers' (Carneiro 1981; 29-32). These groups are still there today, be it in the form of religion in the 'Candomblé'[8] sites, or on land issues, or on the remnants of the quilombola[9] communities, or in their politics and culture, or cultural, educational and social organizations.

In 2001 I went to Lagos, Nigeria to meet and document members of some of those descendant families. With the film in my mind and a camera in my hands (of which had been donated by the then governor of the Nigerian state of Jigawa, His Excellence the Prince Ibrahim Saminu

Turaki), I met Professor Wole Alakija (a cousin of fourth generation and descendant of the second wife of my great grandfather Baba[10] Marcolino, the first Alakija from whom the family nucleus in Brazil was generated), physician and professor at the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Lagos and President of the Union of the Descents of the Alakija. I thank him for the accommodation he provided and the contacts that he organized for me to meet. I met some of the members of our family some of whom were of the second generation, and their descendants, such as the physicians Dr. Ladi Alakija and Dr. Adetokumbo Alakija and their respective families. I met relatives such as Mrs. Adebisi, Mrs. Abudu, Mrs. Bola, and Mrs. Ladapo. I also met other families such as the Da Rocha's – Mrs. Cândida da Rocha and Mrs. Angelica Thomas, granddaughter and great granddaughter respectively, of Mr João Esan da Rocha, the founder of 'Casa da Agua' (Water House) – as well as the Bamgboses. Mr. Paul Bamgbose-Martins, is a descendant of those who laid the foundation of African religion in Brazil. The statements of Mr. Beatriz da Rocha and Mother Irene Bamgbose of accounts of life before and after in Brazil were crucial in the completion of the recovery of the memories of these families.

I consider Professor Wole, when I think of the responsibility of passing on the memory of the Alakija family in Nigeria, as he is the natural successor of the Lady Alakija, the second wife of my grandfather's brother, the Hon. Sir Adeyemo Alakija[11] (1884-1952), one of the giants of law, who thought of Nigeria as a federation, and who played an important role in the writing of the Nigerian constitution. Sir Adeyemo Alakija is unquestionably one of the most beloved sons of Abeokuta (Crownder 1973[1962-66];278), as re-iterated by, the former mother-in-law of the former United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. She told me this in a mixture of English and Yoruba, and my father also stated this, as did my great grandparents Baba Marcolino and Yaya Assumpção,[12] who created the first nucleus of the Alakija in Nigeria, on arriving in Lagos in the nineteenth century. I had the opportunity to meet again my aunt, Mrs. Aduke Alakija (who had been in Brazil in 1976), daughter of the Hon. Sir Adeyemo, and former Nigerian Ambassador in Sweden as well as president of the International Association of Women Lawyers. Additionally, she was also the first Nigerian woman to run an international company – the Mobil-Oil. I also met Lady Ademola, the widow of Hon. Sir Adetokumbo Ademola (1906-1972) who is my cousin, and who was regarded as one of the most important sons of Nigerian history (Coker 1972). He was the president of the Supreme Tribunal of the Nigerian Federal Court in the

difficult time of transition between the end of the British protectorate and the independence. Adetokumbo was guided by his uncle Sir Adeyemo and by his grandfather, Baba Marcolino. He was the son my aunt whose Christian name was Angelina and oriki[13] Tejumade[14], who was married to Prince Alake (king of Abeokuta) in 1920, His Majesty Ladapo Ademola (1872-1962). He ruled for 42 years (Johnson 1973 [21-37-56-57-6069-73]; 671). Unfortunately the Petroleum crisis at the time of my visit (the petrol disappeared from the posts in Nigeria) did not allow me to go as far as Abeokuta, where I would have loved to pay homage to that soil and meet the Obas[15] elders. I am grateful to the Mrs. Funmilayo and her husband, Chief Peter Osabeday, one of the leaders of the ruling party in the state of Agbara-Badagry, who, despite the crisis, went all the way to Lagos specifically in order to meet me and Mrs. Dupe who offered me a wonderful *aso oke*.[16]

Three years later I went to London twice, where I had the opportunity to be met by the Chief, Mrs Lola Ayonrinde, descendant of the Bamgbose family and the Mayor of Wandsworth (1999-...) in south London. We met in the presence of a large number of people of continental African descent, who were in dialogue about the election of the first black mayor in England.[17] There, I interviewed my cousin Anthonia Alakija (Oba of Ikija) – she was some years ago in Brazil – daughter of His Majesty Anthony Kayode Alakija. But nothing would have been possible if I had not had the opportunity to meet another cousin Funmi Alakija, who lived for some years in Brazil. She taught me some elements of Yoruba culture – how to do the *dobale* (reverence to the elders) and the *famomi* (embracing). She also organized my accommodation in London with Mrs. Aboki (wife of the former Nigerian minister-ambassador in Brazil), on one of my trips. *Ana Alakija*[18] *(Omoba de Ikija)*[19]

BAHIA – THE MOST EXPRESSIVE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Brazil has an impressive quantity and quality of families who are descendants of African countries, especially from Nigeria which, on the other end, is the African country that also has significant representatives of Africans of Brazilian descent. The Brazilian nation is one of the largest in the world in terms of the number of people who make up the Afro-descendant population. According to official statistics, the population of 'blacks and dun' is already slightly higher than that of whites. The last census indicated that 49,5 per cent of the 187 million people living in Brazil are Afro-descendants. Furthermore, there are indications that in the next census (2010), this statistic will rise, meaning that the majority of the population

will be of Afro-descent. Color is the most common element that is used to characterize this classification. The definition is broadly based on self-statements, with the census research also showing that there are a growing number of people who identify themselves as being of African descent.

The Afro-Brazilian population is spread throughout the country. But in Bahia there is a particularly high concentration – 80 per cent of the people living there being Afro-Brazilian. Salvador, the capital city of Bahia and the first city to be built in Brazil (1549), has the highest concentration of black people living in Brazil. It is home to probably more than 85 per cent of the total population of black people in Brazil. It is exactly this culture of ancestral heritage that characterizes Brazil as the most impressive in the African diaspora. Furthermore, in this particular case, Bahia, especially Salvador and the cities in the area, have a great influence on other regions in the country. Also, the image that Brazil itself sells abroad is largely influenced by this community. The typical cultural activities such as music, cooking, religion, the habits, the speech and the way of life of its population transform Bahia and particularly Salvador into the most notable place within the African diaspora of the trans-Atlantic nation (Matory 1998; 263-292).

The shared descent of ancestors between Brazil and Africa is a direct creation of slavery. Alongside this creation, slavery also contributed to the severing of ties between Africans and their descendants in Brazil. It is rare to find cases where families have been successful in digging out their history in order to re-establish cultural, social and emotional ties. Presently, the existing evidence is reliant upon the interpretations of the people who lived those memories and who still cultivate their own histories. However, these memories are disappearing because of the death of the older members of families.

Once again, Bahia emerges as the bastion of this rarity. It is a place where the memories and the practicing of religious traditions, of the ways of being, of living and interacting along political, social and cultural tangents seem to act in perfect symbiosis with that of the peoples of the ancient Yoruba kingdoms in Nigeria.

The attempt to recreate those kingdoms, mainly by the Bahia religious communities is extraordinary. The religions of African origin practiced in Brazil are important and have relevance especially amongst those people who have direct lineage from Africa. There were more than 100 orixa[20] houses in the 1930s and presently there are more than 2000 in Salvador alone. They are genuine examples that are officially acknowledged as representations of historical and cultural heritage, with many temples sanctioned by the

government. Indeed, Candomblé has always been important in political and intellectual circles, receiving the attention of influential people within the society, and from many agents.[21] Nonetheless, it has also been the target of police repression since its appearance in the, nineteenth century until 1976, when the government abolished the compulsory payment of a fee, obtained from the police authorities, allowing people to organize a mass (Braga 2 1995; 175-188).[22]

Bahia served as the main port of entry for Africans brought for slave labour, who consequently worked on plantations and within the sugar industry mainly between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Frequently, they were also sent to other States such as Rio de Janeiro, for gold mining and diamond extraction, and São Paulo for coffee production (Pierson 1971 [1942]; 115). The trafficking of slaves to Brazil was led by the Portuguese, and relied upon the participation of Brazilian and Dutch officials as well as the compliance of the European colonizers already established on the African continent (especially that of the British, French and Portuguese). The Portuguese, who controlled the sea routes in sixteenth century, arrived in Brazil for the first time through Bahia (1500). Colonization started about thirty years later, with the introduction of sugar cane plantations. The installation of sugar production mechanisms demanded manpower that the native population, estimated at about 2 to 4 million indigenous people, could not correspond to. The kidnapping, deportation and trafficking of the African population to the Brazilian sugarcane plantations started in the mid-sixteenth century and lasted for about four centuries: the period that represents both the slavery regime in Brazil and Portuguese colonial endeavors.

It is estimated that 37 per cent of the contingent of the population who were forcedly taken to the Americas as victims of the transatlantic[23] slave trade went to Brazil. There were many Africans who were forced to migrate in order to serve as slaves. Some originated from Southern and Central Africa, where the slave traffic started in the islands of Guinea and S. Tome and later reached the Congo, Angola and Mozambique. Others originated from West Africa (Ivory Coast, Benin, Togo, Ghana and Nigeria). The Africans of the second group (mainly Sudanic-language speakers[24]) came mainly to Bahia, although some of them were frequently taken to other States. The first group (Bantu[25]) went to other North-Eastern and South-Eastern Brazilian States (Carneiro 1981; 29). For our focus, we are particularly interested in the first group, where some were Yoruba people from Nigeria. They mostly arrived in Salvador at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century. Most of them were

captured as prisoners when the Yorubas were pushed into neighboring territories as a consequence of the inter-ethnic wars that were stimulated by the commercial system of the time between mainly the Fulanis and Yorubas of the ancient Dahomey Kingdom (present Republic of Benin) and Ibadan (present State of Oyo and the traditional region of the Yoruba people) (Verger 1987; 10. Cunha, Manuela 1985; 26).

The movement of Africans through trafficking was intensified by those inter-ethnic wars, and although slavery itself was forbidden in Brazil in 1850, it was not repressed. Furthermore, the trafficking of Africans continued even after the official abolition of the slavery regime in 1888. This continuation may explain how and why families with direct descendancy from Nigeria still exist in Bahia.[26]

Their inclination to maintain ties to their African ancestry grew from strength to strength from the second half of the nineteenth century by those ex-slaves themselves or by their descendants. Even away from their original homes, many of them were successful in keeping the memory of their origins, life stories as told by their ancestors. Through those memories, some re-met and could reconstruct their families in both Nigeria and Brazil.

There are special examples, many may be within the African diaspora that are similar to that which makes Bahia a land of African nobleness. I do not mean nobleness in the Western sense, where royalty and political power are determined by the quantity of material wealth. Rather, nobleness refers to kingdoms whose concept of nation corresponds to 'people united by the feeling of common origin, language, history, beliefs, desire to live together and equal will and destiny' (Costa e Silva 1994; 24). This does not mean that there was no material wealth.[27] There were many treasures that were lost during warfare and the destruction of kingdoms, their wealth smuggled out when monarchs did not bury them to protect them from enemy nations, resulting in those treasures losing their specific cultural reference and original custodianship. These were the kingdoms where bare-footed princes and princesses lived in communities organized in a manner quite similar to a monarchy, where the succession of leadership was hereditary and subject to certain criteria such as, wisdom, bravery, and life experience. Presently, life is simple. People live in big houses and/or apartments with many bedrooms where big families and many people live together, united by ties of kinship or friendship. Even when the kingdoms were transformed after the arrival of the British colonial rule, which meant that they lost their own traditional powers with the creation of the political parties[28], the traditional chiefs still maintain their influence and importance

in their communities, although now they function as representatives of the governments. They assist in the relieving of tension amongst communities and help to promote peace, harmony, unity and stability (Benson; 168-172).

THE FAMILIES

The examples that follow are crucial in the re-establishment and preservation of Afro-Brazilian ties and how they maintained specific norms and practices such as names, places of origin, organizational relationships, culture, status, material wealth and property, as well as the values of knowledge and spiritual wisdom. They are as follows: the family of Master Didi, supreme preacher of the Afro-Brazilian mass, who is of the traditional family from the Ketu Kingdom in the Oyo Empire; the Alakija Family, nobles of the Abeokuta, whose patriarchs of the clan in Brazil were my grandfather, Dr. Maxwell Porphyrio de Assumpçao (Alakija) and my father, Dr. George Alakija, which includes five successive generations of bilateral movements, Bahia-Nigeria and Nigeria-Bahia; the family of Da Rocha, the founder of 'Casa da Agua (Water House), in Lagos; the Bamgbose family, responsible for the introduction of Shango worship in Brazil; the yalorixa[29] family; Olga de Alaketu, from the Ketu kingdom; and the Islamic family of the king, rei Malê.

MASTRE (MASTER) DIDI

Mestre Didi (1917 – present date), one of the most important spiritual leaders of the Nago[30] community in Brazil, is supreme priest of the eguns,[31] whose title is Alapini. He was ordained in 1968 by the supreme priest of Shango[32], in a ceremony that took place in Oyo[33], where this belief system originated and from where his ancestors were taken as slaves to Bahia. Born in Salvador, he comes from the Asipa[34] family, one of the seven main founders of the Kingdom of Ketu[35], of the ancient Oyo Empire which is now divided by the present border between Nigeria and Benin (former Dahomey) and is presently a city within the Nigerian state. The confirmation of his origin took place in 1967 when, on a trip to that city, it was revealed by the supreme chief of the Kingdom that received him with a praise song,[36] who also showed him one of the palaces saying: 'Ah, Asipa. Your family lives over there' (Mestre Didi 1987; 7-8 e 2003; 11).

Mestre Didi's history is one of the most complete in terms of organization. Documentations of his heritage are maintained and managed by the *Sociedade de Estudos da Cultura Negra no Brasil* (Society of Black Cultural Studies in Brazil) and coordinated by his wife, Juana Elbein dos Santos, an

anthropologist of Argentina nationality. In this institution it is possible to access books, film tapes, video tapes and other media. The available sources about Mestre Didi are uncountable, and almost all references of him quoted in this paper can be found in both national and foreign works.

His full name is Deoscoredes Maximiliano dos Santos (Asipa) – he uses the family name in parenthesis as a title, adding to the end a Christian name, as the Yorubas usually do to identify their lineage. He comes from those who founded the most ancient Brazilian Candomblé yard, the Ile Ase Aira Intile, called Ile Iya Nasso later. The temple also appears in the documents as Barroquinha Candomblé (because of its first location), of the Engenho Velho (Old Skill) and is mostly well known as Casa Branca (White House). This site has been registered by the Brazilian Historical Heritage since the year 2000.

Mestre Didi is son of yalorixa Mae (Mother) Senhora (Lady) (1900-1967) – Christian name Maria Bibiana do Espirito Santo and religious name Oxum Miua. Mãe Senhora started her obligations in 1907 through the hands of Mae Aninha (1869-1938) – registered as Eugenia Ana dos Santos and whose religious name is Oba Biyi – whom Mestre Didi used to call grandmother and who initiated him in the worship to the orixas and gave him the title of Assogba, supreme priest of the worship of Obaluaye.[37] Mae Aninha, on the other hand, was initiated by Babalao[38] Bamgbose and Oba Tossi (Marcelina da Silva), priestess of the second generation of the White House. Mae Senhora is the grand-daughter or great grand-daughter of Iya Marcelina. Iya Marcelina is referred to as Asipa. She was the natural successor of Iya Nasso, from whom she was a filha-de-santo[39] (daughter-of-saint).

Mãe Senhora was the most important of the yalorixas in Brazil, having developed important and continuous religious relationships with the kings and priests of the worship of the orixas in the African continent. In 1952, Alafin (the king of Oyo), gave her the highest honorific title in Yoruba culture – the Iya Nasso. The Iya Nassa is the priestess responsible for the worship of Shango (Costa Lima 1984; 23). She was responsible for the continuation of the tradition Mãe Aninha founded in 1910, the Ile Axe Opo Afonja, where Mestre Didi was initiated in Candomblé. In 1976, Mestre Didi left the Ile Axe Opo Afonja, to initiate himself in the worship of the Malê ancestors and later he founded the Ile Asipa where Baba Olukotun is worshipped as well as other eguns of this ancient tradition of the worshipped Oyo. Apart from being one of the most respected within Afro-Brazilian spirituality, Mestre Didi is also an artist (he has organized some national and international exhibitions of his sculptured works in

nago aesthetic language) and a writer (with many published books, one of the most popular being, *Contos Negros da Bahia* [Bahia Black Stories]).

THE ALAKIJA

The Alakija family is one of the most significant examples when people talk about personification of the African presence in Brazil and the Brazilian presence in Africa, particularly Nigeria. References about the family, its origins, prestige, nobility, and their historical, political, social and cultural contribution to the Brazilian-Bahian and Nigerian societies, are evidenced in books, newspaper reports, magazines and pictures, by anthropologists, sociologists, ethnologists, scholars, researchers, and both Brazilian and foreign journalists. The Alakija family is well loved by those who know their history. The political and social rising of the family both in Brazil and in Nigeria did not deter them from their traditions which continue to be part of their journey, fortifying attitudes of defense of the heritage of their people and their nation.

The Alakija family was the first Afro-Brazilian family to register themselves with their original Yoruba name in Brazil and the only family to transform that assertion into a civil act. Although the first nucleus of the family was established in Brazil and later migrated to Nigeria at the end of the nineteenth century, the second nucleus of the family that was formed in the twentieth century was given the status of immigrant, with only one of their descendants entering Brazil voluntarily. They cultivated the values of their lineage when many of African descent living in Brazil tended to leave aside their identifications with Africa when they rose socially and economically in Brazil, choosing rather to adopt the patterns of European life style in order to be socially accepted (Pierson 1971 [1942]; 272-276) (Souza, 1983; 19-23). Furthermore, the Alakija family continues to keep the ties established between Nigeria and Brazil.

The Alakija's are one of the Yoruba families that founded Abeokuta[40], around 1830. They form part of the collective of families that have, as their ancestry, the people who escaped from confrontations with other nations as a result of the dissolution of the Oyo Empire, during the power dispute between the Fulanis and Yorubas. These refugees came from different cities although they constituted a single unit; they were Egbas[41]. The Alakija, for example, come from Ikija, an ancient city in Ibadan (the present capital city of the State of Oyo and the traditional Yoruba region – Yorubaland) that was completely destroyed by the above mentioned war. Most of the captives were sold into slavery and those who were able to escape, fled to the south. In Abeokuta, the families kept their distinction.

The Alakijas were the founding family of the kingdom[42] of Ikija[43] – one of the present 16 districts of the city (Johnson 1973; 223-233). They governed over one of the seven royal crowns. Alakija is a title attributed to the family because of their origin and means 'owner' (it can also be interpreted as meaning the master or the king).

The first mentioned data of the Alakija family living in Brazil is a couple whose Christian names are Mr. Marcolino Assumpção and Mrs. Maximiliana. He descended from Alakija, and she was the daughter of a great warrior from Oyo, Alpha Cyprian Akinosho Tairu, who was made chief in Abeokuta with the title of Moropo de Ake[44]. They were both born in Brazil. She was born in Bahia, and he was born in the State of Rio de Janeiro and were both registered as 'free'[45]. Their mothers were probably victims of the dissolution of their kingdoms. They may have been pregnant when they were captured, sold at the west coast and 'exported' to Brazil, where they were freed from the slavery regime because of changes in slavery legislature. They met in Bahia and identified themselves as son and daughter of neighboring kingdoms. They fell in love, got married and migrated to Nigeria on a boat, probably around 1850-1878, when a series of discriminatory laws against Africans in Brazil were passed forcing them to migrate back to Africa (Cunha, Mariano 1985;13).

In Abeokuta they were acknowledged as descendants of their ancestral kingdoms and were revered by the local community. Baba Marcolino was immediately made leader Akingbotun and nicknamed Elemeji (a title referring to bravery and heroism). He later became known as Baba Egbe (leader of the Christians). The couple started as business agents and exporters, but they later prospered as farmers, cultivating cotton. Their children who were educated in England, returned to Nigeria, and established themselves in Lagos[46] where they become well known in various areas. These include, law, medicine, education, and journalism (Cunha, Mariano 1985;19). Apart from the very important figures mentioned earlier, Sir Honorio Alakija was remembered as a member of the public who argued in defense of many Nigerians in need of promotions but were stopped by posts being taken by Europeans in the civil services. Of the third generation, the grandchildren, the Hon. Sir Adenekan Ademola was a judge at the Superior Court of Estado of the West of Nigeria and the medical practitioner Dr. Afolabi Alakija,[47] was married to Mrs. Teju Alakija, daughter of Ooni (King of Ilê Ifé). She was the Minister of Culture in the 70s, responsible for the straightening the cultural ties between Brazil and Nigeria (Fonseca Jr. 1988;113). The family has also now branched out into other countries such as the United Kingdom, Holland, Denmark Germany, United States, Sweden and Canada.

Of the five children that the couple had, only one decided not to study in Europe. This man was grandpa Maxwell (1877-1933) who, in 1893, at the age of 16 years old, migrated to Bahia, whose capital city he had stayed in at the age of nine whilst on a brief visit with a relative, where he fell in love. Dr. Maxwell Porphyrio de Assumpção (Alakija), as he signed his name, graduated from the Faculty of Law in Bahia, becoming a lawyer and a profound and respected educator in Bahian society. He worked as a lawyer in defense of the Afro-descendants' rights for inclusion in public schools, in the armed forces and in the struggle for ideas and projects that aimed at impeding the immigration of Africans and their acceptance in the society. He was married in 1907 to a Bahian young woman who was one of the first midwives trained in Bahia, D. Ignez Selene Assumpção, with whom he had three children – the civil engineer, Mr Delly de Assumpção Alakija (d.1949); the well known physician, Dr. Cleonice de Assumpçao Alakija (1910-2000) and the psychiatrist and hynotist, Dr. George de Assumpção Alakija (1921-2005). Outside of this marriage, he had two more children, Mr Daley and Ms Célia, who were taken by him to Lagos, Nigeria. Dr. George (my father) had also an honoured life in terms of his merits. He received a lot of homage when he was alive, including those from the main medical entities in Bahia. He was decorated as Comendator (1977) by the Brazilians for his cultural mission in Nigeria (1973-1977), as well as appointed vice-president of the Organizing International Committee of the Second World Festival of Black Arts and Culture (organized in Lagos, 1977) and made a member of the Council of the Elderly (2003) by the Society Igbimo Agba Yoruba, of Oyo, an honor given only to Yorubas who reach a specific age. These are some examples of how my history has motivated and encouraged me to pursue and deepen this study.

OLGA DO ALAKETU

The memories of Mae Olga of Alaketu, yalorixa of the yard of Ile Maroialaje (Alaketu), one of the most genuine yards of Candomblés of Ketu in Brazil, are essentially from oral traditions existing in Brazil and in Nigeria (Costa Lima 1974; 78-87). The genealogy of the yalorixa Olga, born Olga Francisca Regis (1925-2005), goes back five generations. Chronological support can be sourced from the last decades of the eighteenth century, when the Dahomeyans attacked the kingdom of Ketu. According to the memories of the yard Alaketu, the relatives (a set of 9 year old twins) of the of Oya Fumi (religious name of yalorixa Olga), who were also princesses of Ketu, called Gogorixa and Otampe Ojaro, arrived in Bahia after having been kidnapped by the Dahomeyans. The name Ojaro is a

blended form of Oja Aro, which gave the name to one of the five families known in Ketu and where the Alaketu (king of Ketu) are chosen. In total, nine families founded the kingdom of Ketu, whose first king was Ede; as time went on, four of those families disappeared. The Alaketu who ruled in 1963, led by Oba Adegbite, confirmed that in the Aro family, during Oba Akebioru's rule (1780 – 1795), the Dahomeyans kidnapped people from the Alaketu family. Of those kidnapped, it is confirmed that one carried the name Otampe Ojaro.

According to the oral tradition developed in the yard, the twins were bought at the slave market in Bahia and 'set free by a tall and sympathetic rich man', attributed to the figure of orixa nago Oxumare (associated with the rainbow). Otampe, who in Bahia received the Christian name of Maria do Rosario, was the daughter of the orixa Oxumare. It is said that she returned to Arica and married Baba Laji, later returning to Bahia, where she bought land in the Matatu de Brotas neighbourhood, and established the Alaketu family heritage in 1867. The land was consecrated to the Oxossi, one of the main orixás of Ketu and the house of worship built on the farm was dedicated to the Oxumare.

Mae Olga is the daughter of Ms Dionisia Francisca Régis descendant of Otampe Ojaro (one of the children of Otampe might have been the father of her grandmother's sister, who was called Oba Oinda, which means *king's wife*). 'I have got the title of Queen of Africa, but in Brazil kings don't count, not even queens, because the politics is president and governor ...' (Regis 1984; 27-28). According to the tradition in Alaketu, the succession is decided following the lineage of the founder. Mae Olga was the fifth priestess of the house, initiated at the age of 12 years old. She was very active and used to have frequent contact with high dignitaries in Brazil and the governments of African countries, mainly Nigeria. In 1977, the Brazilian government invited her to represent Brazil in the Second World Festival of Black Arts and Culture (Lagos) having been decorated by the Brazilian government for her role in society. She was also often invited to participate in government exchange programs in the years between 1970 and 1980, where she talked about Afro-Brazilian spirituality. Other yalorixas, scholars, Brazilian and foreign intellectuals, high dignitaries of the Bahian society and Brazilians, would go to her yard and maintain a close relationship with her. Her farm was registered as a national historical heritage in 2004. The archives of the Regis family are still intact.

DA ROCHA FAMILY

Da Rocha is one of the most well-known families in the Brazilian

community in Lagos. The beautiful and solid remains (registered by the Nigerian government) located at 12 Kakawa street, and known as *Casa da Agua,* is both a symbol of the family and a landmark of the discovery of potable water in the city. The patriarch of the family was Mr. João Esan da Rocha, born in Lagos and whose personal history is the tie between Nigeria and Brazil. Mr. Joao Esan may have belonged to a wealthy family of Oyo, of Opo Afonja, Igexa nation of the interior of Nigeria. He was studying in Europe when he was told about the sudden death of his father. He hastily returned to Nigeria and when he arrived in Badagry, he was detained and sold into slavery. He ended up at a house of an abolitionist baron[48] in Bahia who, after noticing that he was a young man with good, distinct manners and European habits, and who spoke many languages, approached the young man (who was then about 16 years old). He offered him his freedom[49].

Once free[50], Joao Esan went back to Lagos, taking with him his Brazilian wife and children, where he built the remains of the Kakawa street (Tororo neighbourhood, where a well was dug in the backyard of the house in 1875), similar to the remains built for the family in Salvador. He thus became the 'originator' of drilling technology used in water-well building unknown until then in Nigeria. Mr. Esan prospered by selling this product, since the water supply in Lagos was problematic.

Until then, potable water came from the Abeokuta region, 70 miles (about 100 km) away, carried by donkeys. It is estimated that, at the time of his death, he may have left a fortune of more that one million British pounds. His eldest son, Mr. Candido da Rocha (1860-1959) was one of the richest men in Lagos at the end of nineteenth century. His descendants are presently in the trade of the importation of Brazilians goods.

The surname Da Rocha is a symbol of wealth and prosperity in Lagos and the family has political prestige at the Brazilian Embassy and Consulate as well as with local government. The memories about the family are essentially oral and are kept by the great grand-daughters of Mr. Joao Esan, Ms. Beatriz Raymunda de Oliveira Rocha[51] (1933 to date) who lives in Brazil and her cousin Ms. Angelica Folasade da Rocha Thomas (Yewuande[52]) who lives in Nigeria and who is president of the Brazilian Descendants Association (founded in 1963), which is located at the Casa da Agua. The first contact between the members of the Da Rocha family in Bahia with those from Lagos was stimulated by the first Brazilian Ambassador to Nigeria (1963-65), Mr. Oswaldo da Meira Pena, with whom Ms. Sra. Beatriz (she is a nurse and midwife) worked for in Brazil.

Immediately ties were strengthened among the members of the family. One of the grand daughters, Ms. Frederica Abimbola da Rocha Afodu Omololu, spent some time in Brazil between Salvador and Rio de Janeiro (1957-1959), when her husband, Mr. A. Omololu, came for training to enter the diplomatic services (he was later the chief of the Court, the same post occupied earlier by the Hon. Sir Adetokumbo Ademola). Mrs. Thomas-mother and Mrs. Thomas-daughter (Yewuande) came to Salvador in 1975 in order to meet the relatives from the land of their parents and grandparents, and were welcomed with the highest honor at the Protecting Society of the Poor. In 1989, Mrs. Thomas-mother won a prize, the Medalha da Ordem do Rio Branco (White River Medal Order) which was received by Mrs. Thomas-daughter, given by the Brazilian government at the Brazilian Embassy in Lagos.

Members of the Da Rocha family in Brazil are respected people in society and regarded with high dignity. Some of those who are related to the patriarch Mr. João Esan are: Mr. Jose Maria da Rocha Argolo (son) and the grandson Dr. Jose Oseas da Rocha (LLB), who were both born in Brazil and died there and of whom Ms. Beatriz keeps with emotion the story of one case where Dr. Jose Oseas da Rocha defended the Carteado family (members of the elite blacks in Bahia) and won (the Carteado family were being threatened to evacuate from the house they were living in, in a Bahia high-class neighbourhood); the great grandson, Mr. Aloisio da Rocha, who was for many years president of the Protecting Society of the Poor; the physicians, Dr. José Ellis de Oliveira Rocha and Dr. Luciano da Rocha; Ms. Maria Augusta Rosa Rocha, teacher and politician – former-Secretary of State for Education, in the 1990s; Father Hélio Rocha (great grandson), pastor of the Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos Pretos (Church of the Our Mother or the Rosary of Blacks), which opened the doors of the Catholic church for the ladies in white[53], thus developing work which was religiously respectful for the Yoruba culture; and Professor Helio Rocha, icon of education in Salvador.

THE BAMGBOSE FAMILY

The Bamgbose[54] family is the most significant example of an African family belonging to the elite of the religious world of the Nigerian traditional religions. They are made up of various priests who came to Bahia. The first member of this family in Brazil of whom there is a memory is the patriarch Babalao Bamgbose, whose Christian name was Mr. Manoel Rodolfo Martins Andrade (Obitiko)[55] (d.1907). His great grandson, Mr. Paul Babalola Bambogse-Martins, with whom I was with in Lagos, said

that his great grandfather came to Brazil with the special mission to implant the axe.[56] The introduction of the Shango worship in Brazil is said to be due to him. Arguably, he may have brought from Africa the elementary fundamentals for the expression of worship, consolidating the Candomblé within the Brazilian nation.

Babalawo Bamgbose was the highest authority on the hierarchy of the fundamentals of Ifa[57] and an oracle of Oyo. He was a member of the Ogboni[58] secret society and one of the spiritual diviners who celebrated the ancestor Tio Joaquim, whose religious name is Oba Sanya. This ancestor was one of the main spiritual assistants of the three African iyas who founded the most ancient Candomblé in Brazil, the Casa Branca (White House), in the 1830s. The priestesses were of a high status in the Nago-Yoruba whose titles in yoruba, corresponded to the religious functions of: Iya Adeta, Iyakala and Iya Nasso. They were linked through the fraternity of Brotherhood of the Nossa Senhora de Boa Morte (Our Lady of the Good Death) Didi[59] (Rodriguê 2001; 42-46). From this yard originated two traditional houses of Candomblé in Bahia: the Ile Axe Opo Afonja and the Ile Oxossi or yard of Gantois.

Babalao Bamgbose was Bale Xango of the White House, the highest missionary post of Shango. A mythical figure, he was the most respected of the Babalaos and also one of the most feared (because of the association of the name of the Ifa to a Exu[60]). He was always invited to special ceremonies, especially to choose the main priest of the yard when done through the Ifa. His figure was so remarkable that he was chased away from Lagos for having participated in a revolt against the British. The Egbas intervened demanding that the British protectorate call them to come back (Olinto 1980; 146).

There are discrepancies about his coming to Bahia[61]. It is said to have happened in 1884, upon an invitation by Oba Tossi (Iya Marcelina), on a trip that he made with Iya Nasso (she was a friend to him and she was the 'mother of blood' or 'saint'and the cousin of Iya Marcelina) of Ketu. They stayed there for seven years. She returned with the daughters and grand-daughters, one of whom was born in Brazil (Claudina), and was initiated by the 'mother of blood' or Mae Senhora[62] to become Mae Aninha. After the death of Oba Tossi, in 1895, and the dispute between the two daughters over the throne of the White House, he went to Rio de Janeiro with Mãe Aninha where they founded another house of orixa and started other iyaos[63]. He did not see her initiated founding, in 1910, of the Ile Axe Opo Afonja (Rodriguê 2001; 45-46). In the space of Ifa, remained babalao Martiniano do Bonfim. The descendants of Mae Caetana (Caetana

America Souza) (1910-1993) (Lajoumim[64]), Mae Regina (Rio de Janeiro), his grandson, whose Christian name is Felisberto Souza (it also appears as Felisberto Sowzer, Oguntosi), continue the religious tradition and founded the yards Axe Lajuomim (1962). This religious tradition is continues to be guided by Haydee dos Santos, from Shango, the Ile Odo Oge, better known as Pilao de Prata, in Boca do Rio (1963, registered in 2004), and also by the babalorixa Air Josand de Sousa (Pai Air) who is responsible for the creation of the Memorial Lajoumim, erected to preserve the Bamgbose memory.

THE MALÊ KING

Among the families mentioned of African noble ascendancy, the Malê king[65] is the role that has not been easy to identify its exact place of origin in Africa, although oral reports and some few documents prove its existence. According to those reports,[66] in 1876, the Spaniards conquered an Islamic community in Nigeria and took over the *igbô*[67] and his *muçurumins*[68] nobility (wife and two children) selling them to the Atlantic slave traders. This family of nobles was bought by a Christian Friar of the Capuchinho Fraternity called Boaventura. They received the christian names of Luiz Felisberto da Silva Couve (d.1905)[69] and his wife, Luiza Hortência. Later, the couple and their daughter got the christian name of Luiza do Espírito Santo, and they were sold to a rich lady who lived in a high class neighbourhood in Salvador (the son was sold separately and lost his family). When the lady discovered that she had a king in her home, she allowed him to be given a different status (he was 'loader of grain'). His fellow workers themselves tried to preserve his noble status. On Fridays they took food to him – the ajeum (it is common in Bahia to give ajeum, a food offering). The king gained freedom and lived under the protection of a local policeman, Aurelino Leal, who benefited from his wisdom and practice of prophecy. He offered him a house where he lived with his wife and grandson Antenor Boaventura (d.1984).

Other references state that the king liked walking with no shoes on. He always had his shoes wrapped in a white piece of cloth in case he had to enter a house with more formality. He usually wore a big white shirt on Fridays (the black Bahia still keep this tradition) and he isolated himself in a small room for prayers on this day. Although he was Malê, he did not practice Islamic worship. He was an Ifa priest, Oluwo[70] and passed his knowledge to his grandson, Antenor. He had a grand daughter Albertina Caetano da Conceiçao, who lived with him and was the conveyor of memories about the family, a tradition still kept by his great-great grandson Juvenal Barreto, who has continued with the ancestral heritage and practices.

The reports about the Malê king are supported from historical facts about the migration to Brazil involving a large contingent of Islamic Africans initially from the Mine Coast (malinkes), to the East of Dahomey in the sixteenth century and again between eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from Nigeria (Hausas, Yorubas and neighboring people). They converted at a time of Islamic expansion in West Africa, especially on the west coast. They became victims of the inter-ethnic conflicts (the jihad – holy war – between Fulanis, predominantly Muslim, and Hausas). The pirate attacks of Spaniards on the Caliph, such as the Caliph of Sokoto (located in northern Nigeria) and of the disintegration of the Oyo empire, ended up making Yorubas (and possibly Igbos) Muslim prisoners and hence, they were sold into slavery and sent to Bahia (Reis 1987; 110-166). The majority of Igbos were Christian, with a minority being Jewish. The ancestry of the Igbo-Jews originated from migratory waves of Hebrews who lived in Southern and Western Nigeria and also of the Israeli people from the Middle-East. The decline of the Jewish communities in West Africa started with the expansion of the Islamic religion on the continent. During the conflicts, many Jews were forced to convert to Islam, others were exiled, sold into slavery or killed.[71] The region of the area where the Igbos come from in the South-East Nigeria is included on some maps as an area where Islamic minorities live. This is a clue that may be traced to discover the origins of the Malê king.

ENDNOTES

1. I have accepted the challenge to write this paper, because of my admiration for Professor Femi Ojo-Ade and Professor K.K. Prah. To contribute to the study on the African Diaspora conducted by the *Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS),* is an honour as I am from a fourth generation Afro-Brazilian family, with roots in the city of Abeokuta, the cradle of the Nigerian renaissance.
2. It is known that the so-called *returning journeys* to Africa were encouraged by the colonial government who believed that the large number of Africans living in Brazil posed a threat, because of the rebellions that occurred in great number in Bahia in the first forty years of the nineteenth century (Cunha, Mariano 1985; 13).
3. Term used by the population of Lagos, Benin and Togo, to refer to migrants especially Afro-Brazilians (Catholics) arriving in these places during the slavery regime; a possible adaptation of the word *ajuda [help],* a Portuguese name of the Uida city which gave the name to the old harbor of Ajuda, in the Gulf of

Benin, integrating the Atlantic traffic route (Cunha 1 1985; 189. Guran 2000. Costa and Silva 1994). There is still an oral reference to the Church of Ajuda in Salvador.

4. It is estimated up to 18 million, is the total number of the traffic to the Americas, of whom 3 to 5 million may have come to Brazil (Pierson 1971 [1942][1943]; 116). But these figures are an underestimation.
5. This term refers to 'diaspora' in its contemporary positive social, political and economic processes of, 'multi-locality', 'global identities' and 'trans-nationalism'; 'social forma' with a 'type of awareness' and with a differentiated cultural and social mode of production (Vertocec and Cohen 1999).
6. Mother tongue name of one of the three major Nigerian ethnic groups; the others are Hausa-Fulani and Igbo.
7. The Alakija are a Yoruba family of the Abeokuta Kingdom who later established themselves in Lagos, Nigeria's former capital.
8. The Afro-Brazilian religion, especially the one dominating in Bahia with fundamentals in Yoruba traditional religion, *Ile Orisha (*or *Orisa)* ou *Ile Ase.* Just like Vodu in Haiti and Santeria in Cuba (Braga 3 1988; 11-12). Another Afro-Brazilian religion is Umbanda (Cacciatore 1977; 256-257). Ver também (Carneiro 1981; 49-61).
9. The quilombos were resistance communities created in Brazil by those slaves who escaped from captivity.
10. The kind way to say 'papai' (daddy); it is also used in addressing elders; same as *baba agba* (grandfather).
11. Decorated by the king of England George VI, father of Queen Elizabeth.
12. Just like my great grandmother (*iya agba* = grandmother) was called Maximiliana in Abeokuta; maybe an adaptation of *iya* (meaning mother, in yoruba) or de iaia (the same as *sinhá*, in Portuguese), used by Africans to refer to girls and teenagers, daughters of their white masters.
13. Codename, given name.
14. *Ade* means crown; when someone adds *ade* to the name, it means that that person belongs to the royal family.
15. Monarch, king.
16. Female gala cloth with three pieces worn on special occasions.
17. John Richard Archer (1863-1932)
18. Journalist (UFBA-EBC, 1976) expert in Community Communication (UFBA-FACOM, 1992) and in Communication and Health (ENSP-RJ, 1993), founder and general coordinator of 'Agência Afro-Latina e Euro-Americana de Informação (ALAI)' (Afro-Latin and Euro-American Information Agency), a non-governmental organization. Contacts: www.alaionline.org ana.alakija@gmail.com
19. Princess of Ikija.

20. *Orisa*, in yoruba: divine entities worshipped in Brazil, especially Bahia, by Candomblé (Santos, Juana 1977; 102-129).
21. Honorific title attributed to the protector of the house (Braga 1 1992; 130).
22. In 1983, through a letter of compromise signed by the main yalorixa (women priests of the cult to the orixas) of the time, headed by Ma Estela de (Mother Estela of) Oxossi, the current yalorixa of terrace Axe po Afonja, in Bahia, the terraces 'formally' broke the Catholic Church, and Candomblé became credited as a religion – till then it was only attended as sincretism, where the orixas were compared to the Catholic religious saint during the cult (Carneiro 1981: 94-98). Contrary to the movement towards its acknowledgement as religion by the society, Candomblé has lately been the target of frequent acts of intolerance associated with the 'devil's thing', from radicals of the Evangelic Church which has been gaining more and more followers strategically organized in various sectors of the society.
23. I still insist on saying that this datum is inconsistent.
24. Peoples of West African languages, whose main representatives in Brazil were the Ewe-Fon from Ghana, Togo and Benin, known by the mining traffic or jejes, and the Yorubas from Nigeria and the Ketu Kingdom, the latter from the republic of Benin, where they are called Nago.
25. 'The Bantu region comprises about 500 very similar languages, which are spoken in Sub-Equatorial Arica. Among them, the most numerous ones in Brazil were three from Angola: Kikongo, also spoken in Congo, Kimbundu and Umbundu' (Castro ....)
26. Brazil and, notably, the State of Bahia were some of the most difficult places, and the last to abolish the slave trade. UNESCO-Slave Trade Archives – Slavery in Brazil. http://portal.unesco.org
27. The Yoruba empire was organized under a bronze craft to the lost wax method (Cornevin 1964; 169-170).
28. In 1950 the system of only one native authority was extinct and the kings did not have legislative power anymore.
29. Priestess of Candomblé.
30. The same as Yoruba, form which is not used anymore. Derogatory nickname that the Yorubas received from their their Fon neighbours (Costa Lima 1974; 73)
31. *Egun* or *egungun*; ancestor spirits found in the religious system of the Yorubas. (Santos, D 1977; 102-129) (Santos, Juana 1977; 119).
32. From the original *Sango* in Yoruba; divinity related to thunderstorm, King of the Oyo (Santos, Deoscoredes 1962; 63-64).
33. The Oyo Empire, founded by the Yorubas was the strongest politically on the West African Coast from the middle seventeenth century to the end of the seventeenth century, having dominated most of the Yoruba kingdoms in present

day Nigeria, Benin and Togo as well as the Fon kingdoms (the former *Dahomey* and present Benin). The present city of Oyo corresponds to the ancient capital city of the Empire (Crowder 1973 [1962-66]; 21).

34. High title of the secret Ogboni society; title originated from the Oyo and is achieved by merit, equivalent to war commanders (Johnson 1973 1921-37-56-57-60-69]; 78, 132, 379).
35. Ancient Yoruba kingdom situated between Nigeria and Benin whose king was Alaketu and which was destroyed by the Dahomeyans in successive local wars. Their inhabitants were sold on the coast and deported as slaves to the Americas (Lima 1974; 73-81) (Olinto 1980; 109).
36. Praise song (Cacciatore 1977; 205). Mantra.
37. *Obàlúaiyé* in yoruba; divinity that sends and cures diseases(Santos, D 1962; 68-71),
38. Priest from Ifá.
39. The same as *ekede*, initiated in Candomblé (Braga 1 1992; 128).
40. Abeokuta, which means 'under the protection of the rock', is located under the rock Olumo and it is presently the State of Ogun (founded in 1976), south-west Nigeria. The city, just like the Yoruba people, had great importance in the development of the culture and education of the country. The people are pioneers in diverse areas: judges, politicians, medical doctors, writers. The Alakija are part of this group.
41. Sub-ethnic group of the Yoruba peoples who founded Abeoluta; natives of Abeokuta (Johnson 1973 [1921-37-56-57-60-69]; 225-227).
42. The kingdoms were formed by families, relatives and other reliable people and had their own government; they constituted a monarchic organization. (Johnson 1973; 90, 95 e 225).
43. The Oba from Ikija was called Akija. Other kingdoms neighboring the Ikija, installed in Abeokuta and the respective titles of their Obas were: Oke-Ora (Osile), Owu (Oluwo), Ijaiye (Olujaiye), Ake (Alake).
44. Ake was one of the main cities of Abeokuta and they lived under the direct orders from the Alake. The military hierarchy of the kingdom, was responsible for defense and had one of the most important responsibilities after the king (Johnson 1973; 90,95e 225).
45. An anomalous category in Brazil, which appeared after the law 07/11/1831 which declared as illegal the trade of Africans (Cunha 1 1987; 22-23) and that applied to the 'prisoners' usually in ships. The descendant Brazilians who were in this category were also considered 'free'.
46. Originally part of Yorubaland, Lagos is presently a cosmopolitan city and considered the sixth biggest city of the world, with the second biggest population density (the first is Mumbai, India) and made up of many peoples, originating from Benin, descendants of the Portuguese, English and people

from the ancient empires made prisoners by ethnic wars, ex-slaves from other countries, especially from Brazil, Cuba and Santa Helena (TradeInvest Lagos, AI Publishing Ltd, Lagos, 2008).

47. With whom my father strongly identified; known as Dr. Alakija in Lagos, the same way as my father was known at Bahia.
48. Would it have been the baron from Itaparica? (Verger 1987; 319) – The story is that the baron used to contribute in favour of the organizations created by Africans under the responsibility of the Catholic Church, through which they articulated their freedom, including the African rebellions which culminated with the Malês Revolt (1835). The Protecting Society of the Poor created in 1832, which still exists as a welfare organization, is one of such organization whose resources were utilized to buy *'set free' letters* (Braga 2 1995; 23-32). The Da Rocha (Sr. Esan and descendants) family would have helped in the raising and revolving funds for the Society.
49. The freedom of an African under slave condition was *given* or *bought* through the *set-free letters* (Cunha 1 1985; 30-31).
50. Legal condition (*set free* or *free)* of an African that had to be given or bought (Cunha 1 1985; 30-31).
51. Whose oriki is *Alake Opo* – 'the preferred daughter of Oxum, the one who can do everything' given by the chief Akan II, at Badagry and confirmed by her aunt Mrs. Thomas, who afforded her the chance understand Shango. It is part of the Yoruba culture for the elders to recommend some guests in Lagos to get to know Shango *Ile Orisha* (at Orixa house). There is a similar recommendation in Bahia, to visit Candomblé.
52. Which means 'mom again', that is, the one who will continue with the mission started by the mother (Fonseca Jr 1988; 111).
53. Those who were worshipping in the African tradition and were also going to the Catholic church, were called this because of their white clothes, used as special clothes for mass services, but also on Fridays; nowadays, it is common to wear white clothes all day on Friday and on popular festivities, a tradition now incorporated in the Bahia culture and followed by the tourists.
54. Bamg means foreman and Ose means axé of Shango.
55. The one who has the authority to play around with shellfish (game of the Ifa).
56. From the original *ase* in Yoruba: dynamic force of the divinities that gives the power of understanding (Santos, J 1977; 39-52).
57. Great orixa of divination and of destiny (Cacciatore 1977; 146).
58. Yoruba society with political, judicial and spiritual functions; Ogboni was the male chief of divinity. Members of the society were counsellors of the Alafin (Oba of Oyo) who mediated (Fonseca 1988; 175) the relationships among social groups (Reis 1987; 286).

59. Founded in 1820 by women of the *Egee* (collective) African female who used to keep the knowledge of the worship of devotion to the às *Iyami* (ancestral mothers) – the Gelede worship – 'to provide the liturgical acts to their fellows of color' (Rodrigue 2001; 42-46).
60. Divinity messenger between the gods and human beings; in the Umbanda it is associated to the devil of the Christians (Cacciatore 1977; 121).
61. The round trip of the Africans and Afro-Brazilians between Nigeria and Bahia were common especially on trade ships after the official abolition of the slave trade – Eusebio de Queiroz law, Law no. 581 – of 4th September, 1850
62. Report from the newspaper A Tarde 03/11/2007 on *Afonja, temple to the service of Xango.*
63. The same as *ekede*, initiated on Candomblé.
64. Mother of the Water Eyes.
65. An adaptation of the Yoruba word *imale*, synonym of muslim (Monteiro 1987; 19-22. Reis 1987; 115). The Malês were the main characters in various slave revolts in nineteenth century Bahia which culminated with one of most bloody urban conflicts in America between the dominant bourgeois elite and the enslaved Africans: the Revolt of the Malês (1835) (Monteiro 1987; 27-32. Reis 1987; 110-166). The Islamic worship was not hegemonic among the Africans enslaved in Bahia – the major ethnic Yoruba were supporters of Candomblé and even the Islamic Hausas had not completely abandoned their native worship, the bori (Reis 1987; 116). But since the Islamic Africans dominated the Arabic writing system, they enjoyed higher status both in work and social status compared to the other Africans who were not Islamized and whose communication was exclusively oral. These situations gave them an advantage and influenced their capacity to structure and intellectualize the struggle for freedom, whose target was the destruction of white power and implementation of an Islamic society, similar to a Caliph (Reis 1987; 136-155). The Malês left a profound signature of their culture, many of which are incorporated in Afro-Brazilian worship and in the customs of the Bahia black population.
66. (Monteiro 1987; 111-118. Vasconcelos, 2000 in Correio da Bahia. Vieira, Hamilton. 1985 in *Jornal Afro-Brasil*).
67. One of the four main ethnic groups existing in Nigeria (Atlas of Nigeria 2002; 78-79); it also appears as *ibo*.
68. As the Islamic Africans were calling themselves in Brazil. It is an adaptation from the word *musulumin* (also *muçulmin*) in Yoruba and whose meaning is the same as 'male', 'muslim'. (Cacciatore 1977; 183).
69. The death certificate shows 'Horta' instead of 'Couve'.
70. Venerable dignitary who inspires respect (Fonseca Jr 1988; 327).
71. The Ibo Benei-Yisrael Jews of Nigeria (2003; 2-3).

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For a variety of reasons, it is often not easily realized that Brazil is home to the largest contingent of people of Afri[redacted]ra. Indeed, estimates sometimes suggest tha[redacted]%, made up of people of African descent. [redacted] by some who do not want to be identified as people of African descent or possibly associated with Africa. As early as the middle of the sixteenth century there began at Bahia extensive and prolonged Negro importation from Africa, and the Bay of All Saints in Bahia became for all intents and purposes the principal port of entry into Brazil for this trade in black skins from the African coast. Bahia was and continued to be the preeminent commercial city of Brazil till the beginning of the 1830s. Certainly, during the colonial period, lasting almost three centuries (1549-1822), Bahia was the focus of wealth production in Brazil. The forced African population transfer to Brazil eventually became what is, probably, "the greatest intercontinental displacement of Negro peoples which ever occurred." African slave resistance mounted with frequency during the early part of the 19th century. In 1807, 1809, 1813, 1816, 1826, 1827, 1828 and 1830, slave revolts broke out in Bahia, culminating in the major Malê rebellion of 1835. A good part of the rebels were Muslim. The 1835 rebellion marked an important watershed and triggered the beginning of the repatriation process for some freed slaves and also those suspected of instigating or provoking resistance by the slave community. However, long before this period, some returnee cases had occurred.

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